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Volume 139



NOVEMBER
2019

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Founded 1881

www.britishchessmagazine.co.uk

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ajedrezspectacular.blogspot.com
FIDE Official, Shutterstock

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ISSN 0007-0440
© The British Chess Magazine Limited

Company Limited by Shares
Registered in England No 00334968

Postal correspondence:
Albany House, 14 Shute End
Wokingham, Berkshire RG40 1BJ

Subscription
support@britishchessmagazine.co.uk
12 monthly issues
UK: £55 | RoW: £85

Printed in the UK: by Lavenham Press Ltd

Cover photography:
David Llada

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A TOURNAMENT WHICH WILL BE REMEMBERED

By Milan Dinic*; Photo: FIDE/David Llada/Milan Dinic

The FIDE Chess.com Isle of Man Grand Swiss, which took place in October, was arguably one of the strongest chess tournaments ever held: it brought together the World Champion, World No 2, and a number of other top world players, followed by an army of 2600+ strong GMs - altogether 154 participants from 42 countries. If such a tournament had been held back in the day, it would probably have been a subject of numerous books like various others about similar events (Alekhine's *New York 1924* and 1927, Bronstein's *Zurich 1953*, to name a few). We live in different times now, and books about tournaments (or, books in general even) are no longer in trend. Whatever means there may be in the future, the FIDE Grand Swiss 2019 should probably have a special edition dedicated to it.

Officially, the tournament was a part of the cycle for determining the challenger to the reigning World Champion. The winner was guaranteed a spot in the Candidates tournament in 2020, which will determine who will take on Magnus Carlsen. This tournament was a joint

If such a tournament had been held back in the day, it would probably have been a subject of numerous books like various others about similar events... Whatever means there may be of disseminating information may be in the future, the FIDE Grand Swiss 2019 should probably have a special edition dedicated to it

effort by FIDE and the Isle of Man tournament organisers. Over the years, the Isle of Man chess event - which is supported by the Scheinberg family (which has created the multi-billion dollar gambling brand Poker Stars) - has grown from a small tournament to one of the biggest chess events in the world, attracting top players and providing excellent conditions for both the players and the spectators. It therefore seems that FIDE was right to team up with the organisers of such an event, at it may prove to be a good example of how things could be done in the future when it comes to other events.

This tournament was a joint effort by FIDE and the Isle of Man tournament organisers. Over the years, the Isle of Man chess event – which is supported by the Scheinberg family (which has created the multi-billion dollar gambling brand Poker Stars)

There has been a large number of draws in this tournament - 441 out of 840 (52.5%), while 263 (31.3%) ended in a victory for White and 136 (just over 16%) were won by Black. The analysis provided by one of the arbiters at the event, Arno Eliëns, painted a more detailed picture: 50 games ended in a draw within 30 moves, 22 games ended as miniatures, and 14 games reached 100 moves or more. There are many factors impacting the structure of the results: the ambitions of the players, how they felt on a particular day, how the positions developed, pairings, and also the tournament system. In informal comments during the event, the

There has been a large number of draws in this tournament – 441 out of 840 (52.5%), while 263 (31.3%) ended in a victory for White and 136 (just over 16%) were won by Black

prevailing view among the players was: the first three rounds were important to advance towards the top boards as much as possible, see how things developed in the middle and then either play safe or go into the games hard until the end.

Given the strength of the contestants (especially looking at the top tier of participants), we have seen players demonstrate extremely high levels of preparation, often finishing well after the 20th move. The chess.com live commentary and analysis, which was provided alongside the games, has shown that in the majority of cases, especially on the top 20 boards, players did play at similar levels to top computers.

The tournament has seen a great number of players complete norms, including two countries getting their youngest GMs ever: Vincent Keymer (14) of Germany and Jonas Buhl Bjerre (15) of Denmark. The youngest player to achieve his final GM norm was the 13-year-old Indian Raunak Sadhwani. At 13 years, nine months and 26 days, Sadhwani became the ninth youngest player in the world to reach the GM title and India's 65th GM.

The youngest player to achieve his final GM norm at the event was the 13-year-old Indian Raunak Sadhwani



SHOULD CARLSEN AND CARUANA HAVE PLAYED AT THE ISLE OF MAN?



In organisational matters, one issue came about at the Isle of Man: given that the main goal of the tournament was to determine one new entry for the Candidates, was it right that the World Champion, and World No 2 - who have no need to qualify for the Candidates - take part in the event? Had, for example, Carlsen and Caruana finished as the winner and second, it would have meant that the third-placed player won the Candidates place.

Both Magnus Carlsen and Fabiano Caruana thought they should not be allowed to play, but said that it was up to FIDE to decide. (Their goal at the event was the prize money - as the organisers have created an impressive \$430,000 prize-fund.) FIDE will have a difficult task given the fact that, should they decide that those who have qualified already or by their status (World Champion and World No 2) are not able to compete, the question is would the Isle of Man organisers (or any prospective organiser in the future), want to stage an event where the top two world players would never be able to play?

THE TOURNAMENT

The tournament ended with a surprising victory for the Chinese GM Wang Hao (8/11), who defeated England's David Howell in the last round and, effectively, killed two birds (and Howell, along the way), with one stone: he finished as the winner of the event (having a better tie break than the runner-up Fabiano Caruana) and took the spot in the Candidates. Wang's victory was a surprise given that he was not considered as the favourite to win the tournament but, also, because he seemed to have his mind on other things: in several

conversations I had with Wang at the event (where I was undertaking the role of the FIDE press officer), he seemed to be thinking whether or not chess is to be his main call in life.

Given the strength of the contestants (especially looking at the top tier of participants), we have seen players demonstrate extremely high levels of preparation, often finishing well after the 20th move

Luck was also on Wang's side - how else to explain the blunders made by his opponents in the final two rounds. In the penultimate round, Wang beat Vishy Anand. Just as he was making confident progress towards the top of the tournament, after a surprise loss in Round one, former World Champion Vishy Anand was stopped in the 10th game, having blundered in a mostly even position as White against Wang Hao. David Howell - as will be shown in the analysis in this issue of BCM - also made a mistake which was hard to believe.

Fabiano Caruana - who, like Wang, scored 8/11 - finished second due to a slightly weaker tiebreak. There is, however, one (seemingly) unusual thing about this: out of all the top performers at the event, Caruana was always playing on either board one (eight times) or board two (three times). The third place was shared between six contestants - Kiril Alekseenko (who finished third) and Levon Aronian, David Anton, Magnus Carlsen, Hikru Nakamura and Nikita Vitugov, all on 7.5/11.

Among the top players, the tournament was probably most important for the 37-year-old Levon Aronian. It was a make or break event for the Armenian as it was probably the last realistic chance for him (given his age) to qualify for the Candidates and the opportunity to take down Magnus Carlsen. It was not to be: Aronian started with two draws, then accelerated between rounds three and seven scoring 4.5/5, but in the end it was draws all the way. In the final round he was playing on board two against the World Champion Magnus Carlsen. Aronian had to defeat the World Champion in order to secure an opportunity to get into the opposite seat against him in the match for the title. The game, however, ended in a draw.

Although he finished in the second tier of players, this was a record-breaking event for World Champion Magnus Carlsen who, with four wins and seven draws, set a new world record - 101 games without a loss.

The winner, Wang Hao, flanked by Fabiano Caruana (left) and Kiril Alekseenko (right)



ALEXEI SARANA – WATCH OUT FOR THIS NAME



One of the surprising starts at the 2019 Grand Swiss was the 19-year-old Russian GM Alexei Sarana. He finished the tournament on six points with a performance rating of 2720.

In Round two he almost created an upset, after managing to lure none other than the World Champion Magnus Carlsen into an uncomfortable position, leaving him struggling for a draw. The Russian later admitted it was all part of his own preparation - which went as far as move 22!

He then continued with a streak of draws in which very strong and experienced players struggled to keep up: Yu Yangyi, Artemiev, Harikrishna, Gujrhati. Only 19, Sarana is a player to look out for in future events.

PERFORMANCE OF THE BRITISH PLAYERS

In terms of how the players from the British Isles did, David Howell was the best, finishing eleventh, with seven points. The Englishmen started slowly but then picked up speed in the second part of the event. Had it not been for the blunder in the ultimate round, he would have probably stood a great chance of securing a place in the Candidates.

Howell was followed by Luke McShane who, with 5.5 points, finished in the middle. McShane played well throughout the tournament, starting with a draw and

then securing three consecutive victories, followed by another draw - against Caruana - in round five. The key point of the event for him was the Round 6 duel with Wang Hao which he lost. Sadly, McShane was not great on the finishing line, losing the final two games.

THE KING OF DRAWS

One player at the tournament drew all 11 games: Victor Erdos of Hungary split the point in every single game he played.

Unlike McShane, Gawain Jones had a bad start to the tournament - having suffered losses in the first two rounds. He recovered in Round three, after a victory over IM Dietmar Kolbus, but then went from draw to draw, with a win in Round eight and a loss in Round nine. Jones finished on five points and ended up in the lower part of the scoreboard.

Keith Arkell finished on 131st place with 4.5 points. Finally, the eight-time winner of the British women's Chess Championship, Jovi Houska, had only 3.5 points and finished at the bottom of the board, on 143rd place.

Given that the Isle of Man is not recognised as an independent chess federation (which might soon change), their players participated under the flag of England. They all finished the event towards the bottom of the table.

THE BEST WOMAN PLAYER HARIKA DRONAVALLI

Altogether, 18 women players took part in the event. Indian GM Harika Dronavalli was the most successful female participant, having achieved 5.5 points out of 11 games all played with GMs. The highest-rated woman player at the event, Dronavalli started in the 122nd place and finished 83rd. She gained 23 points and her performance level was 2651.



**Disclosure: BCM editor Milan Dinic was the FIDE press officer at the FIDE/Chess.com Isle of Man Grand Swiss*

The main playing hall at the Comis Hotel





HOW TO PLAY

WHEN YOU DON'T KNOW

WHAT TO PLAY FOR

By GM Aleksandar Colovic / www.alexcolovic.com
 Photo: FIDE/David Llada/Milan Dinic

The last round in the FIDE Chess.com Isle of Man Grand Swiss tournament saw several candidates vying for the coveted qualification spot. It has been a tendency lately among the world chess elite, perhaps with the rise of the pragmatic approach à la Petrosian, to play as safely as possible and bet on a draw. Not winning is not considered a tragedy. The players today seem not to feel the moral duty Kasparov felt when he had to play for a win against Kramnik in the last round in Linares 1997 and in Astana 2001 in order to win the tournament. Safety was a priority in the Isle of Man.

In the final round of the tournament, the player with the highest tie-breaker, Wang Hao, was paired with England's David Howell. A win would guarantee the Chinese player a qualification to the Candidates and a probable win in the

tournament. For David, the situation was almost the same, only that a draw was not acceptable due to the bad tie-break score.

Wang had the advantage of white pieces, but, more importantly, he had the best tiebreak score of all the players with seven points, which meant that he was in the best position to secure a place

The Grand Swiss forced many players to be aggressive since only one place was worth all the trouble – to be the winner and qualify for the Candidates. This led to chances for the lower-rated players and frequently they took them – after all, these 'lower-rated' players were rated comfortably in the 2600s

in the Candidates', even with a draw. Out of all of the other top players with seven points after 10 rounds, Howell had the worst tie-break. This meant that - if he wanted to get in a chance to challenge Carlsen for the title of the World Champion - he needed to win in round 11.

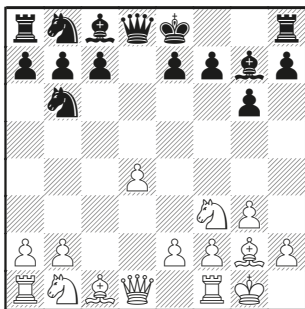
Wang Hao - David Howell

FIDE Chess.com Grand Swiss Douglas ENG (11.4)

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 The Grunfeld is one of Howell's mainstay openings against 1.d4. It fits the occasion perfectly, as it gives Black good counterchances and possibilities to play for a win in dynamic manner.

3.g3 The Fianchetto is one of the safest lines against all openings, not only the Grunfeld.

3...♗g7 4.♗g2 d5 5.cxd5 ♘xd5 6.♖f3 ♗b6 7.0-0



This is considered imprecise, due to Black's response, but that is only if White is trying for an advantage. As it turns out, White didn't mind simplifications.

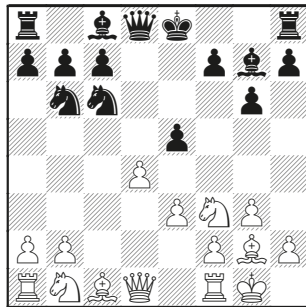
David Howell's impressive streak (4.5/5) in the second part of the tournament and the overall score of 7/11, finishing eleventh, showed that he has the strength to pull himself together after a slow start and get back into the fight



David Howell

7.♘c3 ♘c6 8.e3 is the more precise move-order, as now after 8...e5 White has 9 d5.

7...♘c6 8.e3 e5!



Now White cannot push d5, so simplifications in the centre ensue.

9.♘c3 exd4 10.♘xd4 Further proof that White didn't mind a draw. True, having the best tie-break helps, but where was the guarantee that the others would draw too? Or perhaps Wang Hao didn't care so much whether he will win or not, similar to Radjabov's attitude in the World Cup?

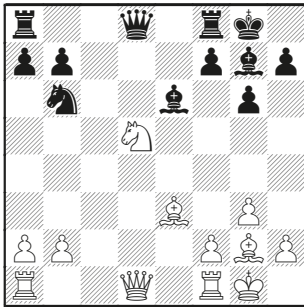
10.exd4 leads to a more complex play, though Black should be fine after 10...0-0 11.♗g5 ♖d7.

10...♞xd4 11.exd4 c6 If Black could establish a firm blockade on d5 he would be doing great, but White has the immediate

12.d5! which eliminates the IQP.

12...cxd5 13.♞xd5 0-0 14.♙e3 The position is symmetrical and total extermination of the forces is to be expected.

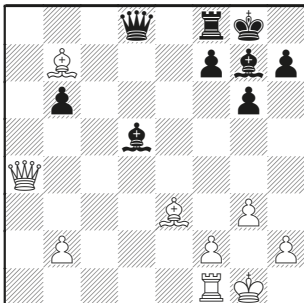
14...♙e6



The bishops are looking in the direction of the queenside and the pawns will find it difficult to survive.

15.♞xb6 axb6 16.♙xb7 ♞xa2 17.♞xa2 ♙xa2 The position is completely equal. From how White played it was clear by now to David that he wanted a draw. But that was frustrating for him because it gave him no chances whatsoever to try to qualify for the Candidates by playing for a win.

18.♞a4 ♙d5?



David spent 1 minute and 59 seconds on this move, if we are to believe the live translation. It is a move that introduces an imbalance in the position, but the problem is that this imbalance gives White a winning position. Did he try to play for a win by trying to force matters even at his own expense? Or did he try to make a draw by setting up a fortress? He later admitted that nerves let him down, but that doesn't answer the above questions.

After **18...♙e6** the game would be drawn soon enough.

19.♞d1 ♙xb7 20.♞xd8 ♞xd8 21.f4 Opening luft for the king so it is never in danger.

21...♙xb2 22.♞a7 White now takes the pawn on b6 and it is only a question as to whether he can win the position with all pawns on one side of the board. This is definitely not a way to play for a win for Black, but was it perhaps a provocation to play like this with White? We don't know, but it worked!

22...♞d7?! This makes it even more difficult for Black, as it weakens the back rank that White can use to attack the king.

22...♞e8 23.♞xb6 ♙g7 was more resilient, trying to play for a fortress.

23.♞xb6 ♙a1 24.♞b5 ♞d1+? **24...♙c8** was stronger, but it's an ugly move to make. It is all about the back rank.

25.♙f2 ♙h1 26.♞e8+ A matter of choice.

26.♙e2 followed by **♞b1** would have won one of the bishops.

26...♙g7 27.♙c5 White now wins with a direct attack that results in winning more material.

27...h5 28.♙f8+ ♙f6 29.♞e7+ ♙f5 30.♞xf7+ ♙f6 31.♙e7 It's over as the bishop on f6 falls.

31...♖d2+ 32.♔e3 ♖xh2 33.♜xf6+ ♔g4
34.♜xg6+ ♔h3 35.f5 ♕d5 36.f6 ♔g2
37.♜c2+

1-0

A heart-break for the English player, who had a historic chance to qualify for the Candidates, but it was not meant to be. Nevertheless, Howell's impressive score in the second part of the tournament and the overall score of 7/11, finishing eleventh, showed that he has the strength to pull himself together after a slow start and get back into the fight. As long as that spirit is with him, he has chances of achieving further great successes in his career.

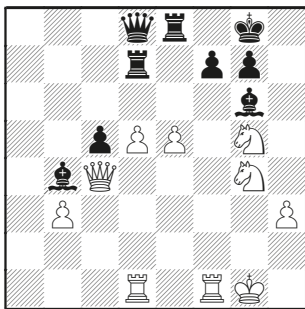
MCSHANE'S EARLY RISE

If David Howell was the (tragic) British hero at the end of the tournament, Luke McShane was the hero of the start.

After a 121-move draw in Round 1, he went on to win the next three. Sharing the lead with Caruana, he had a great chance to continue his winning series.

Luke McShane - Fabiano Caruana

FIDE Chess.com Grand Swiss Douglas ENG (5.1)



One look is enough - White is totally dominating and is winning. But there are a lot of pieces on the board and White's king is exposed, so White should be careful.

39.e6? Tempting, but missing the win.

39.h4 simply defending the knight and keeping all the threats was much more practical.

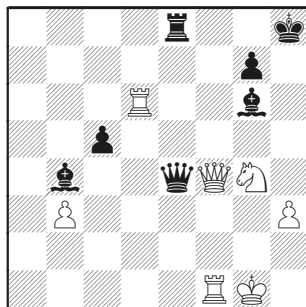
39...fxe6? Caruana misses his chance, but luckily for him he will have others.

39...♜xg5! draws, but Black had to see 40.exd7 ♖e4! with the threat of ...♖g4 with a perpetual check. Here we see the dangers White's exposed king hides. 41.♖a1!? is a curious attempt to continue the game 41...♖xc4 42.♖a8+ ♔h7 43.bxc4 ♕c3 this is probably the simplest, though other moves should draw too 44.d8♜ ♕d4+ 45.♔h2 ♕e5+ 46.♔xe5 ♜xe5+ 47.♔g2 ♜e4+ and White cannot hide from the perpetual.

40.♔xe6 ♜b8 41.d6 Now White is winning again, but the position remains complex.

41...♖xd6 42.♔c7+ ♖de6 43.♖d7 ♔h8 44.♜f4 Unpinning the knight (as the black queen could have come to g3) and winning the exchange.

44...♜b6 45.♔xe6 ♜xe6 46.♖d6 ♜e4



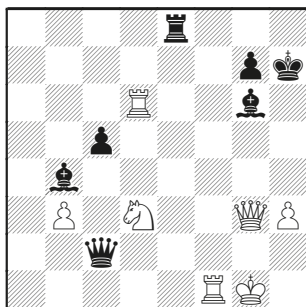
47.♜g5! Exchanging queens would make Black's task easier as the bishops dominate on the empty board.

47...♔h7 48.♜h4+ ♔g8 49.♜g3 A consolidating manoeuvre ♜g5-h4-g3 allows White to attack Black's kingside. Note that the bishop on b4 is still hopelessly out of play.



Luke McShane

49...♔h7 50.♘f2 ♕c2 51.♘d3



Very good play by McShane after the time-control: this move forces further exchanges.

51...♔e4? It is understandable why Caruana didn't take on d3, as that would give White a technically winning position, but this should have lost faster.

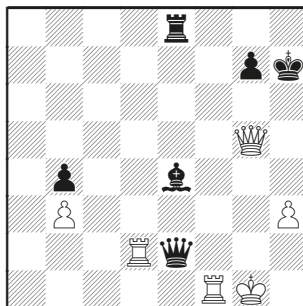
51...♔xd3 52.♖xd3+ ♖xd3 53.♖xd3 should eventually win for White.

52.♖g5 Threatening ♖h5.

52...♖e2 53.♘xb4?! Still winning, but taking the bishop that was out of play doesn't feel right.

53.♘c1! ends it on the spot, as the queen can no longer control the h5-square. 53...♖b5 is the only way to defend the rook after the check on h5, but that doesn't help much: 54.♖h5+ ♔g8 55.♖f4! with the threats of ♖f7 and ♖h4 and ♖xe4 followed by ♖d8.

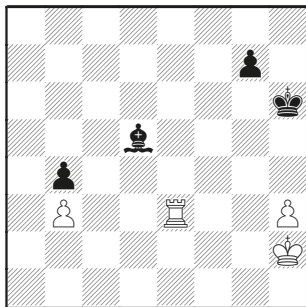
53...cxb4 54.♖d2



Still winning, but the tendency to let it slip by not ending it as soon as possible continues. However, this time the most precise move is a tough one. It must be said though that the game has been very difficult for both players: it demanded a lot of difficult and complex calculations, so it is not surprising that by this point they were both missing things.

54.♖d4! White doesn't really threaten anything (perhaps to take on b4) but Black is in some sort of a zugzwang. 54...♔g8 (54...♖e6 55.♖d2 and now the queen's access to h6 (as in the game) is blocked by the rook on e6. 55...♖a6 56.♖h4+ ♔g6 57.♖d7 with the deadly threat of ♖g3.) 55.♖d7 ♖b2 56.♖d8 ♔g6 Black cannot take on d8 because he loses the bishop after ♖xd8-h4. 57.♖d2 and White wins a piece: 57...♖c3 58.♖xg6

54...♖a6 55.♖h5+ ♖h6 56.♖xh6+ ♔xh6 57.♖e1 ♖e5 58.♔h2 ♖d5 59.♖xd5 ♔xd5 60.♖e3



And even though this is still winning for White, the old unwritten rule of not winning a won game long enough will spoil everything in the end proved true again. By posing maximum problems Caruana managed to save a draw.

1/2-1/2

This game distinctly divided the fates of both players - Caruana stayed in the lead until the end, while McShane lost his next game to the eventual winner Wang Hao and then even lost his last two games.

CRUSHING THE FAVOURITES

The Grand Swiss forced many players to be aggressive since only one place was worth all the trouble - to be the winner and qualify for the Candidates. This led to chances for the lower-rated players and frequently they took them - after all, these 'lower-rated' players were rated comfortably in the 2600s. The following game is a good example. In Round 8 Grischuk was among the leaders and with a win would have achieved the coveted +4. But he was paired against a talented Spanish player...

David Anton Guijarro –
Alexander Grischuk

FIDE Chess.com Grand Swiss Douglas ENG (8.3)

1.c4 e5 2.g3 The point of this move-order is to avoid the following line:

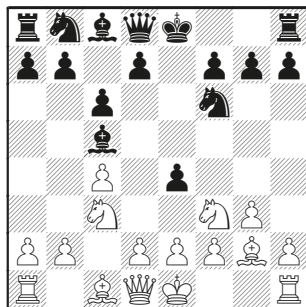
2...c3 2.f6 3.f3 c6 4.g3 d5 5.cxd5 dxd5 6.g2 c5 which has been one of Grischuk's many original opening ideas and it was successfully employed by Caruana in his match with Carlsen; it also helped Radjabov deal with Ding Liren's English in their final match at the World Cup.

2...f6 3.g2 c5 After 3...d5 4.cxd5 dxd5 White has 5.f3, forcing the knight to retreat or to take on c3 (as Dubov has done on more than one occasion).

4.f3 c6 Since there is no pressure on e5 Black plays ambitiously and tries for ...d5.

5.f3 5.e3 is the main alternative, but as Ding Liren showed in two of his games (against So and Carlsen) Black is quite all right here after 5...0-0 6.ge2 d5 7.cxd5 dxd5.

5...e4

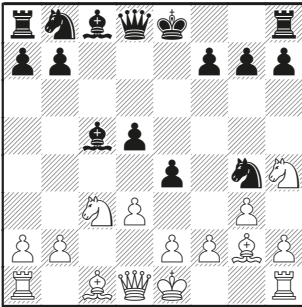


The critical move. Playing 5...d6 is possible, but after a later d4 White would be better. Now the game enters forcing lines and rather murky territory.

6.h4 d5 7.cxd5 cxd5 8.d3 Black's centre is on the verge of collapse, but

the knight on h4 is without squares and a lot depends on the concrete lines. In the analysis afterwards, Guijarro said that "if you see a knight on h4 followed by g5 that seems to trap the white knight - that will mean a whole point for White."

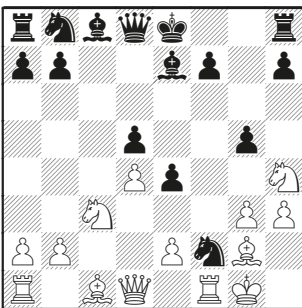
8...♖g4



Winning a tempo to cover the g5-square so as to allow for ...g5.

9.0-0 g5 10.d4 ♕e7 After 10...♕b6 11.♗f3! exf3 12.exf3 ♗f6 13.♕xg5 White has good long-term compensation for the piece in view of Black's unsecured king.

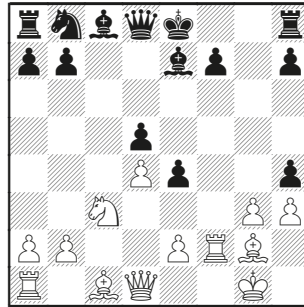
11.h3 ♗xf2?!



Grischuk spent almost half an hour on this. It is impossible to say whether he was on his own or whether he was trying to remember his preparation, but objectively this isn't the best move.

11...gxh4 12.hxg4 ♗c6 has been played before and it leads to an unclear position, for example 13.♖b3 ♕e6 14.♖xb7 ♖c8 15.♕f4 0-0 where it's difficult to say what is going on - both kings will be rather weak after Black takes on g3 and g4.

12.♖xf2 gxh4

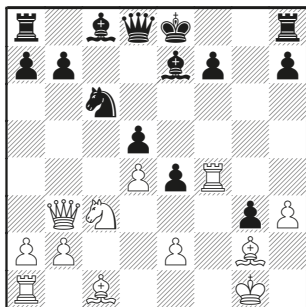


13.♖b3! It turns out that White has almost finished his development while Black has only moved two pieces - the knight that went from g8 to f6, g4 and f2 (3 moves) is gone and the bishop that took 2 moves to go to e7 is the only remaining developed piece. Black's objective now is to try to keep the centre closed so that he can finish his development.

13...hxxg3 Grischuk spent more than 25 minutes on this move.

13...♕e6!? is the engine's curious suggestion. The curiosity lies in the fact that after 14.♖xb7 ♖d7! 15.♖xa8 0-0 Black sacrifices a full rook and is not lost! In fact, White has the only move now 16.♕h6 but after 16...♖d8 Black threatens ...♗c6. 17.♗xe4 is an attempt to extract the queen if Black takes on e4, but Black won't, so 17...♗a6 18.♖xd8+ ♖xd8 19.♗c3 hxxg3 20.♖f3 ♕d6 leads to a completely unclear position.

14.♖f4 ♗c6

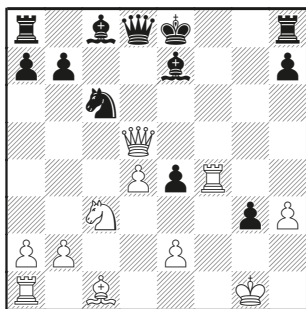


15. ♖xd5 Anton spent 59 minutes on this move! Indeed, there were a lot of lines to calculate...

15. ♘xe4 was an alternative, but Black holds after **15... ♘e6 16. ♘xd5 ♖d7** followed by ...0-0-0.

15...f5 **15...0-0** was an alternative, though White is on top after **16. ♖xe4 ♘f6 17. ♖xd8 ♖xd8 18.d5** as the pawn on g3 will be likely to fall and the two central pawns are a force to be reckoned with.

16. ♘xe4 fxe4?



The decisive mistake, on which Grischuk spent less than a minute and a half.

The position was dangerous, so it was high time Black exchanged queens: **16... ♖xd5 17. ♘xd5 ♘d7** and while White is better (Black has more

weaknesses to defend) Black has good chances to survive.

17. ♖h5+ Now we get a 19th-century king hunt.

17... ♔d7 18. ♘e3 White is fully developed and attacking the king; Black has barely managed to get two of his pieces in play - just as in Morphy's time.

18... ♖g8 19.d5 ♘d8 20. ♘xe4 The threats are piling up and Black is defenceless, being attacked from all sides.

20... ♖g6 21. ♖e5 ♘f7 21... ♘d6 22. ♘xd6 (or **22. ♘f6+**) **22... ♖xd6 23. ♖xh8** wins material and continues the attack.

22. ♖xf7! ♖xf7 23. ♖c1 With all due respect to the traditions, White is a full rook down.

23... ♖f8 24. ♘g5 Mate is coming quickly, so Grischuk resigned.

1-0

A brutal game!

With this victory, the Spaniard launched himself among the top ranks after eight rounds, sharing the lead with Fabiano Caruana and Levon Aronian. In Round 9 he shared the point with Levon Aronian. His chances of winning the tournament were, however, crushed in Round 10 when he was defeated by Caruana. David Anton, however, did manage to win in the last round and finish the tournament in 5th place.

CARLSEN'S RECORD

The World Champion didn't win the tournament, but set a new record - he didn't lose a single game again and reached 101 classical games without a loss. (There are some debates whether GM Tiviakov's and GM Lalic's 110 game streaks are of the same calibre and worth being considered as records.)

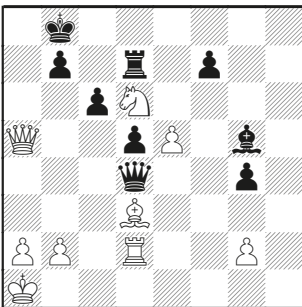


Magnus Carlsen; Photo: David Llada

In any case Carlsen's opposition consists of elite players and not losing to them is a magnificent feat. Still, Carlsen's form in the second half of the year took a dip and he needed quite a bit of fortune to stay undefeated. As early as Round 1 Carlsen showed vulnerability. He misplayed a promising opening and was on the verge of a loss:

Magnus Carlsen - Yuri Kuzubov

FIDE Chess.com Grand Swiss Douglas ENG (1.1)



Here Black had a chance to wrap the game up, but he was in time trouble and he missed it.

33...♟xd2? This lets Carlsen off the hook.

33...♞xe5! was decisive - the knight has nowhere to go and White won't have enough compensation for the material deficit. 34.♞d1 ♞xd6 35.♟f5 ♞e7 36.♟xg4 ♞e4 with ...♞b4 or ...♞b4 to come and White will find it difficult to defend b2.

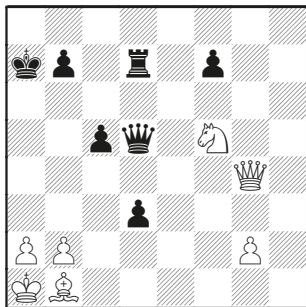
34.♞xd2 ♞xe5 35.♟f5 c5 36.♟b1?!
36.♞e2 was better, with an approximately equal endgame after the exchange.

36...d4! Black has an advantage again.

37.♞d3 ♞d5 37...♞d5! was strong, keeping White tied down to the defence of the knight, which doesn't have good squares to go to.

38.♞g3+ ♟a7 39.♞xg4 d3?

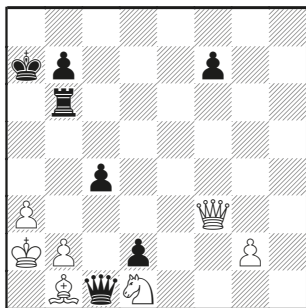
The World Champion didn't win the tournament, but set a new record – he didn't lose a single game again and reached 101 classical games without a loss



39...c4! was better, but the position is difficult to play for both sides, with many factors affecting it. The game move allows the knight to slot in on e3 comfortably.

40.♞e3 ♞d4 41.♞f3 d2 42.♞d1 The knight returned and the pawns are under control. The position is dynamically balanced now.

42...♞c4 43.♞e3 ♞d4 44.a3 ♞c1 45.♞b3 ♞d6 46.♞a2 c4 47.♞f3 ♞b6



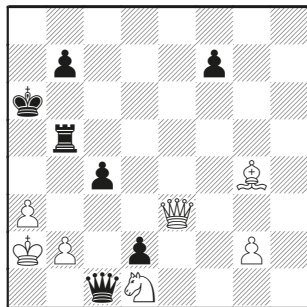
47...c3 would have forced a draw after 48.♞xc3 ♞xd1 49.♞c5+ ♞b6 50.♞a5+ ♞a6 51.♞c5+ with a perpetual check.

48.♞f5 ♞b5? This loses the game for Black.

48...c3 was again a move to draw. There were others too, but this one is the most direct one. 49.bxc3 (49.♞xc3 ♞xd1 50.♞a5+ ♞a6 51.♞c5+ leads to the same

perpetual from the previous note.) 49...♞a6 50.♞b2 ♞b6 51.♞d1 ♞a6 is a repetition of moves.

49.♞e3+ ♞a6 50.♞g4



White managed to coordinate his pieces and now plays for a win.

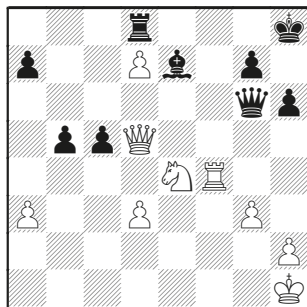
50...♞c2 51.♞c3 ♞b3+ 52.♞b1 ♞d5 Kuzubov lost on time while making this move. It's not a good move, as it drops the f7-pawn after 53 ♞f6.

1-0

This game wasn't an isolated case. Carlsen was dead lost in his game from Round 4 against Vladislav Kovalev.

Vladislav Kovalev – Magnus Carlsen

FIDE Chess.com Grand Swiss Douglas ENG (4.7)

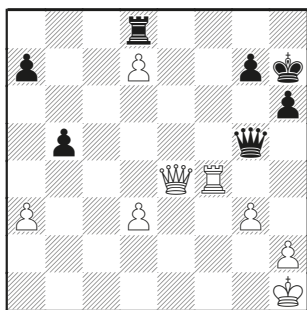


The engine gives more than +9 here for White. But Kovalev was in severe time-trouble.

30. ♖xc5 Not bad, even if it's "only" +5 now. The problem is not in the numbers, it is in the character of the position. Black is indeed paralysed, but there is no direct win, White still needs to work a bit to deliver that final blow. With little time on the clock Kovalev couldn't see it because it was not immediate, and this made him impatient.

30.h4 was the most sadistic way, threatening h5 and then ♖f7.; 30.♖f5 was another dominating move, with the threat of ♖e5.

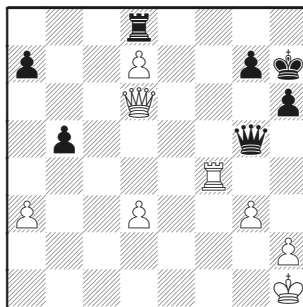
30... ♗xc5 31. ♖xc5 ♖h7 32. ♖d5 ♖g5 33. ♖e4+



Kovalev gave some checks and repeated the position in order to reach move 40, but these repetitions did little to clarify what he needed to do.

33. ♖f5! was the way to go. Black is paralysed, but White still needs to play. For example: **33... ♖e7 34. ♖f7 ♖g5 35. ♖e4+ ♖g6 36. ♖e7 ♖g8 37. d4! a5 38. ♖g1!** with ♖f8 to follow. An engine-generated line, showing how White should be careful in avoiding checks and combining the threats of pawn promotion with king safety. It's still not over though, as Black can play on **38... ♖g5 39. ♖e6 ♖g6 40. d5 b4 41. ♖e7 ♖d8 42. ♖e8** finally promoting. This is very far from easy, to say the least, so don't let the +9 numbers fool you.

33... ♖g6 34. ♖d5 ♖g5 35. ♖d6?!



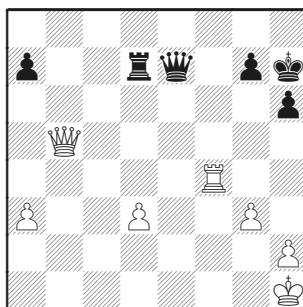
White is slowly letting it slip.

35. ♖f5

35... ♖g6 36. ♖c7 From this point it's not at all clear that White is still winning. Unfortunately he couldn't go back to the winning set-up of ♖d5, ♖f5 due to a threefold repetition.

36... ♖g5 37. ♖d6 ♖g6 38. ♖c7 38. ♖d4 ♖xd6 39. ♖xd6 ♖g8 40. ♖g2 ♖f7 41. ♖f3 ♖e7 42. ♖a6 ♖xd7 43. ♖e4 is a better rook endgame for White, but it should be drawable for Black.

38... ♖g5 39. ♖c6 ♖e7 40. ♖xb5 ♖xd7



White let it all slip. Now it's a draw.

41. ♖f5+ ♖6 42. ♖f8 ♖xf8 43. ♖xf8 ♖g7 44. ♖a8 ♖f6 45. ♖g2 ♖xd3 46. ♖xa7 ♖d2+ 47. ♖g1

½-½

The drama of this game was portrayed in the FIDE report from the round, and illustrates how close the World Champion was to his first loss in a long time:

KOVALEV VS CARLSEN: SAVED IN THE NICK OF TIME

*Among the top boards of the Grand Swiss, the most dramatic game of the day was that between **Magnus Carlsen** and **Vladislav Kovalev** of Belorussia. The World Champion was lucky to escape with half a point after his opponent (who is 215 points lower-rated!) got into serious time trouble and managed to miss several winning moves.*

Kovalev, who played as White, took the initiative early on. After 20 moves, he pushed his pawn to d-6 and dominated in the centre with the queen and knight. With all of his pieces activated and well-positioned, and with a completely safe king, it seemed there was no hope for Magnus Carlsen. By move 26 the World Champion was completely lost. The expression on Carlsen's face reflected the gloomy atmosphere of what was mostly a rainy day on the Isle of Man.

The scene was set for a dramatic event: the World Champion Magnus Carlsen was at the brink of losing and ending his streak of 93 games and 438 days without a loss. Carlsen had only one thing going for him: Kovalev was in serious time trouble - he had under two minutes to make 14 moves to reach the first time control.

Still, World Champions are great not just because they are good at winning but, also, because they are skilled at defending. Appearing completely calm, Carlsen played the most precise moves which his position required. The tension was high and the large number of GM spectators further electrified the intense atmosphere on the board. At one point, Azeri GM Rauf Mamedov passed by, looked at the position and the clock and disapprovingly shook his head and mumbled something.



The 25-year-old Vladislav Kovalev (who won the strong Aeroflot open in 2018 and this January scored 10/13 in the Tata Steel B-tournament), was starting to panic: his look frantically shifted between the clock and the board. The Belorussian was down to his final seconds. His feet dug into the carpet, leaning on the side of the table trying to keep his legs still, but his body was shaking. Carlsen then offered a repetition of moves, but Kovalev wanted to go for the win. In the next couple of moves, however, he missed everything he could. He did pass the time control but at the price of losing his pawn on d7 and exchanging the queens, which led to an even rook ending.

After this, Carlsen got up for a good walk. When he came back, his opponent was still shaking his head in disbelief, trying to come to terms with a lost opportunity. Kovalev still had a loose pawn on the a-file, but the position was even. The players agreed to draw.

This was the closest the World Champion had come to defeat for a long time. Carlsen's unbeaten run continues and is now on 94

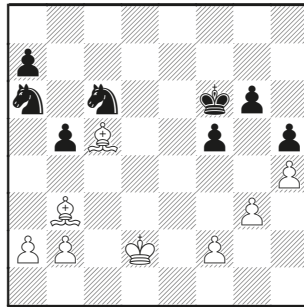


A good tournament for Boris Gelfand who gave a good chess lesson to the Indian talent Nihal Sarin;
Photo: David Llada

the classical games Englisch-Steinitz (1883), Blackburne-Lasker (1892) and Flohr-Botvinnik (1933), to name just the most famous ones.

Boris Gelfand - Sarin Nihal

FIDE Chess.com Grand Swiss Douglas ENG (2.32)



games and 439 days. The World Champion is struggling, but he is still just one point away from contending the top place.

From the FIDE, Isle of Man Grand Swiss Round four report, by Milan Dinic, published on FIDE.com on 13th October 2019.

It is difficult to beat the World Champion! Even when he's lost the winning lines are anything but easy and he poses such problems on the way. Still, to achieve 101 games without a loss some luck is definitely required, but this luck was more than deserved by Carlsen's resilience.

A CLASSICAL EXAMPLE

Boris Gelfand had a good tournament, he was one win away from the desired +4, but that dream was crushed when he lost to Matlakov in Round 9.

Gelfand played good chess and the lesson he gave to the Indian super-talent Nihal Sarin is one worth examining. Gelfand's conversion of the advantage of two bishops vs. two knights was in no way inferior to

The classical endgame of two bishops vs. two knights arose more than 20 moves before and Gelfand methodically improved his position while limiting the movement of the knights. Now the decisive moment arose.

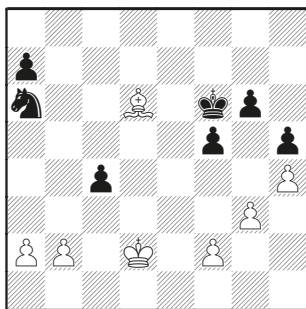
53. ♕d6! Limiting the knight on a6.

53... ♖a5 53... ♖ab4 won't change much after 54. ♕c3 a5 55. a3 ♖a6 56. ♕a2 and Black is in a zugzwang - the usual way these positions are won. If the knight from c6 moves then the white king can go to d4 and if the black king moves then 56... ♔g7 57. ♕d5 ♖d8 58. ♕d4 when the bishop from d5 will move to allow the white king to go there.

54. ♕d5 Typical domination!

54... ♖c4+ This leads to a loss of a pawn, but Black was short of moves as b4 was threatened.

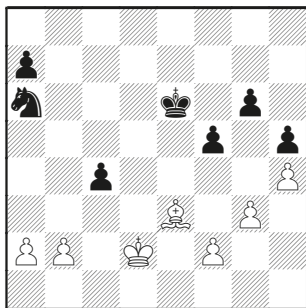
55. ♖xc4 bxc4



56. ♖f4! Precision until the end!

It was still possible to mess up with 56. ♖c3? ♖e6! winning a tempo by hitting the bishop 57. ♖f4 ♖d5 58. ♖e3 ♖c5 with a draw.

56... ♖e6 57. ♖e3



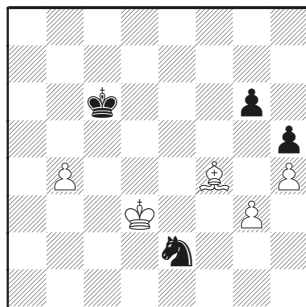
White doesn't only win a pawn, but he also obtains a passed pawn on the a-file.

57... f4 58. ♖xa7 fxg3 59. fxg3 ♖b4 60. ♖c3

It was also possible to keep the a-pawn by playing 60 a3, but the b-pawn will also suffice.

60... ♖xa2+ 61. ♖xc4 ♖c1 62. b4 The rest is automatic: White pushes the b-pawn and if the black king tries to stop it then he switches to the kingside to attack the defenceless pawns there. The principle of two weaknesses at its most basic.

62... ♖d7 63. ♖e3 ♖e2 64. ♖f4 ♖c6 65. ♖d3



Switching to the other side. Additionally, Black has problems with squares for his knight.

65... ♖g1 66. ♖e3 ♖b5 67. ♖d6 ♖h3 68. ♖e7 ♖c6 69. ♖f3 ♖d7 70. ♖f6 ♖e6 71. ♖g2 The knight is trapped.

1-0

BCM EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH FORMER WORLD CHAMPION VISWANATHAN ANAND



CHESS IS NO LONGER RECOGNISABLE FROM THE TIME WHEN I GREW UP

By Milan Dinic
Photo: David Llada/Milan Dinic

Photo: David Llada

Viswanathan Anand needs no introduction to the chess world. The first Indian Grandmaster ever and undisputed world champion from 2007 until 2013, he is one of the strongest and most respected players in chess history. At the age of 49, Anand is still at the very top of the chess world, currently ranking 13th in the poll of players, most of whom were born in the second half of the 1980s and in the 1990s. The chess revolution he started in India when he became the country's first Grandmaster in 1988 has now led to there being 65 Indian GMs, many of whom are in their teens and early 20s or 30s, promising a lasting presence at the top of the chess world.

My first face-to-face encounter with Anand was in one of the hallways of the Commis hotel at the Isle of Man in October, where he was playing at the Grand Swiss and I was there as the FIDE Press Officer. As we were passing each other, he looked directly at me, smiled and said 'hello'. I responded accordingly, but was a bit surprised - it is not often that people acknowledge a passer-by, and this especially seems to apply to many chess players who actively try to avoid any contact with anyone they don't know.

Early on during the Isle of Man event, we agreed to do an interview and, after a few days, we sat in the hotel foyer, not far away from where our paths first crossed. The narrow hallway did not allow for us to sit facing each other, but we had to sit on two sofas side-by-side, moving our legs out of the way when someone passed by.

As we were literally sitting on the path between the playing hall and the rooms, players often passed by us. Young and old, you could clearly see the difference in not just how they were dressed but also how they carried themselves, with the older ones usually showing slightly more social awareness than the younger players. All knew Anand - some had played against him as he was coming up in the chess world, some looked up to him as they were growing up. Just as we were about to start the interview a player - who had already finished his game - was walking down the hall with a large black book in his hand. One of the arbiters rushed quickly to him, to warn that tech devices are not allowed near the playing area. The arbiter had obviously mistaken a book for a tablet. The situation prompts a reminder - Viswanathan Anand is 49. When he became GM in 1988, chess journalists were still carrying typing machines with them to do their reports, and players were carrying bags full of books to help them prepare. Today's world is so different and Anand seems to have had the best of both worlds - enjoying glory in both the book era and the computer era. I begin by asking him about how he sees the transformation between the two eras and what impact that had on chess.

"Chess is no longer recognisable from the time when I grew up. The way we studied chess, the way we played, and the way we prepared before a game - everything has changed", says Anand.

Have we lost something?

"Maybe, but I think we have also gained a lot. We should point out that computers

have opened up many interesting vistas where we can play chess. There is lot of exciting chess that happens as well".

On the other hand, "something" has been lost, the former world champion says: "It's hard to describe it. It's like describing to someone what life was like in the 1950s - you can almost no longer relate to it. I sometimes come across my old notes which are two/three moves deep with a note to myself 'aha - this seems playable', but it's different today".

When computers were beginning to dominate top chess Grandmasters, it led to proclamations that humans were nearing their end and that computers would take things over. Many still think we're not far away from that outcome but, when it comes to chess, Anand is one of those who thought the end was near but has changed his opinion since.

"I now think that computers will not kill the game. I used to think that we were running out of ideas, but it seems that there are constant surprises and that chess is much deeper than we used to think."

The changes brought about by computers "at the moment" are positive, says Anand, but "whether it's good or bad, we'll see".

THE NEW GENERATIONS

When Vishy Anand entered the chess elite, the chess world was dominated by the likes of Kasparov, Karpov, Timman, Beliavsky, Short, Ljubojevic. The mighty chess powers such as USSR and Yugoslavia still existed while India had a handful of IMs and not a single GM. Kasparov was the only one with a 2800 rating, while Karpov was some 70 points behind and everyone else was in the 2600 club. That generation has now been replaced with the likes of Carlsen, Caruana, Ding Liren, players from countries which nobody then had assumed would become leaders in the chess world. Throughout this period of transformation, which saw

not only computers change chess but also the shift in generations among top players, Anand has been at the top. He argues that the current generation has a much cleaner slate to start from than the previous one, and, of course - the computer.

"I think for many of them the computer is something that has always been there and that's maybe the difference with my generation because that's something we did not have at all. We vaguely remember skills like adjourned analysis and setting up a position with pieces yourself, whereas the current generation thinks of these things differently."

In terms of how difficult it was for him to go through the changes, Anand underlines one factor as key - adaptability.

"I have adapted my way of thinking and playing to current trends. Was it hard or difficult, how did it go? I hardly noticed. It's like asking me 'how was ageing for you'. I hardly noticed - I aged. I adapted and I will continue adapting every day. You will face problems every day but I faced problems before as well."

HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE A GM TO ASSESS A POSITION WHEN LOOKING AT IT?

At tournaments we often see GMs hovering over other boards. Sometimes they spend a few seconds, sometimes, a few minutes. How long does it take for a GM to assess a position?

"The moment I look at the position I have an assessment, but that could be - 'this looks nice for White' or something like that. So, first you see the position - where the pieces are placed - and instantly you may have an opinion that you like that position for one of the sides. Then you look for further features and you keep looking for more and more information till you can come to some sort of conclusion", explains Anand

"I have adapted my way of thinking and playing to current trends. Was it hard or difficult, how did it go? I hardly noticed. It's like asking me 'how was ageing for you'. I hardly noticed - I aged"

CHESS AND THE MEDIA: "THE NEWS MEDIA ARE NOT THE NEWS MEDIA ANY MORE. CHESS IS NOT CHESS ANY MORE"

Chess still seems to be struggling to reach a broader audience. While the internet has helped provide the world with access to many things, it has also led to the creation of silos, where those in them are not aware of things happening around them. This is also a challenge for chess, argues Anand.

The former world champion turns to technology as the key facilitator of the change which has benefited chess. He refers to the 1972 Fischer-Spassky match, where the main news media programmes often began with chess, as a bygone period.

"The Reykjavik era of chess has changed but it has to be said that the news media are not the news media any more. Chess is not chess any more. Newspapers and big media houses nowadays are sort of important but hardly anyone depends on them for news these days. Therefore, there have been profound changes which have affected everything."

The way we consume chess nowadays has had a significant revamp, notes Anand: "If you're watching a game on your phone, you are following it at a much higher level than the players sitting at the board because you have advanced computers which are showing you better what's happening than the players themselves could possibly see.

This also usually includes commentary and graphics. So, the viewer experience for a casual viewing has improved. But it's still a struggle."

The bottom line, the former world champion argues, is that chess is personality-driven and always has been.

"You had Fischer; then Karpov and Kasparov - two guys with similar names who were fighting and hated each other; then Kasparov seemed to have a thing going on with the Soviet Union... I am talking for the person who is most distant from the game - they know only a few fragments like this and say 'OK, I know something about chess'. And then, when I came along, my countrymen started to follow the game more and now we see that effect on Norway. So it goes."

"CHESS CONTINUOUSLY STRIVES TO HAVE SOMEONE WHO CAN CONNECT TO THE OUTSIDE WORLD"

The conversation then turned to the personalities of the top chess players today. The topic lent itself naturally to this occasion, in a way, because one of the things very noticeable to this reporter during the Isle of Man event was how many of the top players avoid any form of contact with anyone, especially the media, with some even interpreting a polite introduction as being 'attacked by people'. The younger generation is 'different' says Anand.

"They are interested in many other things, but I can't relate to those things. Many of them know a lot about various video games, they follow lots of sports - you can talk to many top chess players about sports such as football or similar - but, you're right [that many are very closed and focused only on chess - note, BCM]. Chess continuously strives to have someone who can connect



to the outside world. I think the younger generation is more interesting, but it's true that the hobbies and the subjects they are interested in are not the same as for the wider community have."

"THE PENDULUM HAS DISAPPEARED"

One of the topics often discussed in the chess community is whether or not the pendulum of the centre of the chess world is swinging towards India and China and that those will be the new global centres of the game. Anand has a completely different opinion, arguing that "the pendulum has disappeared" adding that "forty years ago you could take a map of the world and on that map I could show you places from which I could guarantee you that in ten years there would not be a world champion. That has changed."

Here is Anand's explanation of the change, in full:



“Imagine that forty or fifty years ago you were born on some remote Pacific island. Imagine that on a Sunday you learnt about chess and that you were curious about it. You spent Monday looking for someone who knew something about it. Tuesday you went to the library to check if they had a chess book, but there was nothing there. Wednesday you contacted your relatives and friends to see if they knew anything or anyone who would know anything - and it turned out they didn’t. By Friday that spark had gone and you had probably forgotten about chess. Some 40 or 50 years ago, there were probably many cases where people got in contact with the game, but haven’t managed to find anything more about it, and their interest has disappeared forever.

Now, it’s different. If you are born in some Pacific island, and if you have internet, the previous story will be different: Sunday you would learn about chess, Monday you might log on to the Internet and search about chess, Tuesday you could have a

chess lesson online and then you would find people online to play chess around the clock.”

And then Anand turns back to his own life experience: “This is one of the reasons that India had a world chess champion. In my case, my mother was the reason I got into the game. But, again, back then - if your relative played chess, you had someone to play with. Now chess has never been more accessible. The 100-rating-points advantage you used to get just because you were born in a chess centre like Moscow probably doesn’t exist any more. Fifteen years ago would anyone have predicted that we would have a world champion from Norway? - of course not! There is no country which I can rule out from the possibility of having an incredibly talented player emerge.

In terms of where there is most investment and development in chess, China and India are often pointed out as good examples. In a conversation with the editor of BCM (which will be published in one of our following issues), Wang Hao of China - the winner of the Isle of Man tournament - said that it is a wrong impression that there is a lot of investment in chess in China. Anand partly agreed with that assessment, “but I would say that India is not that promised land either”.

Anand says that his home country has got a great chess movement and so much talent that it has significantly

“Chess continuously strives to have someone who can connect to the outside world. I think the younger generation is more interesting, but it’s true that the hobbies and the subjects they are interested in are not the same as me or the wider community”



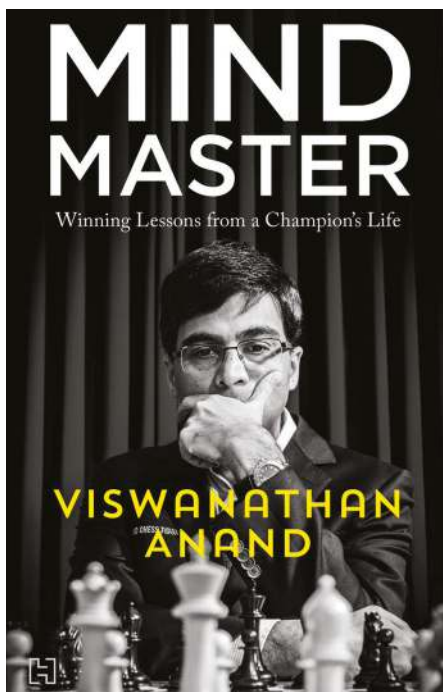
increased the probability of success, but that it still struggles with organisational issues and funding.

“India still struggles with the question of how you make chess available to the broadest possible audience continuously and not just because of a specific event.”

When it comes to the US, the former world champion thinks that it is too reliant on one sponsor.

“I think they are too dependent on Rex Sinquefeld. I don’t see anything self-sustaining there. Everything hangs on Rex. In a way that’s good and bad.”

“Forty years ago you could take a map of the world and in that map I could show you from which I could guarantee you that in ten years there won’t be a world champion. That has changed.”



THE KEY LESSON: "YOU CAN'T REDUCE ANYTHING TO A LESSON"

Vishy Anand is not only an active chess player but also an author who has written about his games and chess. In December "Mind Master: Winning lesson from a Champion's Life" will be published, where Anand talks about what chess taught him about life and life skills. The book, published by Hachette India, will be released on 11th December. However, this is not your regular chess book.

"It's part biographical - the part about management. I try to tell my story, not like a biography as such but more like fragments. You will get a broad picture about chess and my career, but at the same time, I tried to pick out some things that I think chess has taught me and try to draw some lessons from that and highlight those things. My other aim was to help someone who doesn't know much about chess. What is it they could learn from the skills chess teaches."

Anand says that the simplest lesson he's learnt is that there is no formula in life and that learning and failing go hand in hand, continually.

"What I found interesting - when you write the book you think about everything for the second time - you can't reduce anything to a lesson but there are still things that can be learnt and that learning is continuous. I cannot even learn from my mistakes. It's the same old wine always coming in a new bottle. Therefore, it's very difficult to define one principle and say - this is what I've learnt. A lot of chess is determined by your personality and nerves."

As we reach the end of our 40-minute conversation, computers again come up. One of the things computers have

WHAT CHESS TEACHES CHILDREN

- Chess specifically teaches you skills like memory, concentration, decision making. Especially decision-making - it teaches you that you will always have two or three good alternatives, but at some point, you'll have to choose just one and stick to it. Therefore, and I think this sort of thing comes naturally out of chess, it's a healthy habit to learn chess, but there's no reason a child has to take it seriously. A few school competitions and a few classes and it will develop certain skills that will be useful for education.

affected, according to Anand, is the confidence of Grandmasters.

"Nowadays you are also very conscious that you could be wrong because the computer has shown something. Maybe we've lost confidence because we are continuously contradicted by the computer analysis. The problem is that I am no longer certain I can trust my judgement. I feel that my judgement is worth something and if I'm in time trouble I have to trust my judgement. But, the positions are often much deeper than you realise and you spend much more time to think. Again, and this comes up in the book - how do I look for the sources that I don't have a habit of using. That's a theme that's come up again because of the influence of computers. Part of my solution was - you have to keep on working and exposing yourself to new ideas. In fact, your intuition doesn't conjure something like magic, intuition is just work you forgot that you did", concluded Vishy Anand.



FIDE World Cup 2019

THE RETURN OF TEIMOUR RADJABOV

AS THE NEW GENERATION OF TOP PLAYERS SURFACES

By GM Aleksandar Colovic / www.alexcolovic.com

The FIDE World Cup (10 September – 4 October) is definitely one of the most interesting and exciting tournaments to follow. A knock-out event always produces a winner and this makes the FIDE World Cup exciting for the fans and much more stressful for the players.

In this article I would like to share my impressions of several players who made a mark on the tournament.



TEIMOUR RADJABOV

The name of the winner was definitely a big surprise, at least I didn't see him coming. The 15-year-old wunderkind who inflicted Kasparov's first loss with white pieces in seven years back in 2003 was widely expected to be a major force in the chess world. And he was, until 2013, when he burned out and collapsed at the London Candidates, where he finished last with four out of 14, losing more than 30 rating points in the process. After this debacle Radjabov changed. He became a "boring" player, making draws whenever he could and, seemingly, lacking ambition for anything more. This slowly started to change two years ago, when he won the Geneva Grand Prix and had a chance to qualify for the Berlin Candidates, but he was still off the radar for many. Now came Khanty Mansiysk.

Still playing in his usual careful manner he advanced, not attracting too much attention. Until the following game.

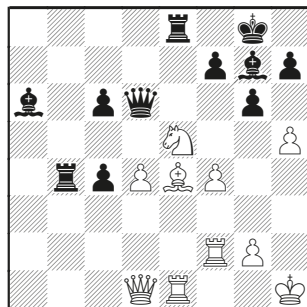
Winning always brings confidence, but winning by superior calculation and against a strong opponent is priceless

Shakhriyar Mamedyarov



Shakhriyar Mamedyarov –
Teimour Radjabov

FIDE World Cup 2019 Khanty-Mansiysk RUS (4.6)



The two good friends - Mamedyarov and Radjabov - who always draw their games, were forced to decide a winner between them. In this second blitz game the situation was tense and Mamedyarov lunged forward.

35. ♖xf7!? Objectively speaking, this should also lead to an equal position, but in my view this is the turning point in the tournament for Radjabov. In a high-stakes game, against one of the best players, attackers and calculators in the world, he managed to out-calculate his opponent and win the match. This win was a major confidence-booster for Radjabov, who started showing more belief in himself and his play.

35.f5 is the engine's preferred move, leading to an equal endgame after 35...♙xe5 36.hxg6 hxg6 37.fxg6 fxg6 38.dxe5 ♜xd1 39.♞xd1 ♜xe5 40.♙xg6.

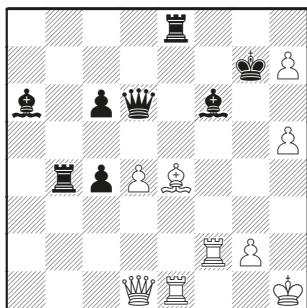
35...♙xf7 36.f5 ♙f6? Radjabov is the first to blunder. We, however, know from Tartakower that the player who wins the game is the one who makes the penultimate mistake.

36...♞xe4! 37.fxg6+ ♙g8 38.♞xe4 hxg6 was obviously a 0.00 position, this being obvious only to the engine, of course.



When friends fight: Mamedyarov and Radjabov

37.fxg6+ ♖g7 38.gxh7??



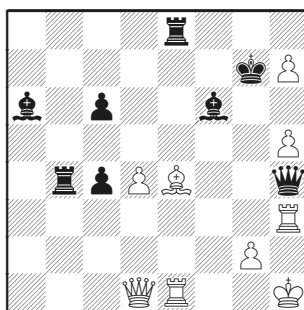
In this game it was Mamedyarov who made the last mistake.

38.h6+! is not only the move to win, but at the same time was the only move not to lose! 38...♖xh6 39.gxh7 and the difference here is that the queen has to defend the bishop on f6, thus not being able to go to g3 as in the game.

38...♖g3! Now Black is winning as White's attack comes to a standstill.

39.♖f3 39.h6+ ♖h8! is the difference and the bishop cannot be taken in view of 40.♖xf6 ♖h4+

39...♖h4+ 40.♖h3



40...♖xe4! Radjabov controls the tactics well.

41.♖f1 41.♖xh4 would have led to a pretty mate after 41...♖xh4+ 42.♖g1 ♖xd4+ 43.♖f1 c3+ 44.♖e2 ♖h1#.

41...♖b3 Many moves win; this one is rather nice, "sacrificing" a queen.

42.♖xh4 ♖xh4+ 43.♖g1 ♖xd4+ 44.♖f2 ♖b2

0-1

Winning always brings confidence, but winning by superior calculation and against a strong opponent is priceless. The remainder of the tournament showed it and Radjabov beat Xiong in another crazy game before dispatching of Vachier-Lagrave in the semi-final after the Frenchman played too quickly and made a mistake early in the opening.

The final was notable for the importance of not caring too much. Having made the final and secured a spot in the Candidates, Radjabov was in a must-win situation in his last game with White in the match against Ding Liren.

Teimour Radjabov - Ding Liren

FIDE World Cup 2019 Khanty-Mansiysk RUS (7.3)

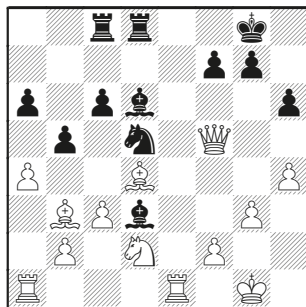
1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♙b5 a6 4.♙a4 ♘f6 5.0-0 ♙e7 6.♗e1 b5 7.♙b3 0-0 8.c3 Radjabov had already made one toothless draw in Game 1 of this match in the Marshall. In a must-win situation, to go for it again must have been a major surprise for Ding Liren, who certainly didn't refresh his memory of the many drawing lines in this opening. Radjabov's gamble paid off 100%.

8...d5 9.exd5 ♘xd5 10.♗xe5 ♘xe5 11.♗xe5 c6 12.d3 ♙d6 13.♗e1 ♙f5 14.♖f3 ♖h4 15.g3 ♖h3 16.♙e3 Deviating from 16.♘d2 as played in the first game of the match.

The name of the winner was definitely a big surprise. Radjabov, the 15-year-old wunderkind who inflicted Kasparov's first loss with white pieces in seven years back in 2003, was widely expected to be a major force in the chess world. And he was, until 2013, when he burned out and collapsed at the London Candidates

16...♙xd3 17.♘d2 ♖f5 18.♙d4 ♗fd8 Other rook moves are also possible, like 18...♗fe8, as played by Carlsen.

19.a4 h6 20.h4 ♗ac8 21.♖xf5



Deviating from two previous games by Ding Liren.

21.axb5 axb5 22.♙xd5 cxd5 23.♗a5 (23.♖xf5 ♙xf5 24.♗a5 b4 25.♗xd5 ♙e6 with sufficient compensation after 26.♗a5 bxc3 27.♙xc3 ♗b8 ½-½ (37) So,W (2799)-Ding,L (2769) Berlin Candidates 2018) 23...♖xf3 24.♘xf3 ½-½ (35) Karjakin,S (2750)-Ding Liren (2805) Saint Louis USA 2019 and here a possible alternative to Ding's 24...♗e8 is 24...b4 25.♗xd5 ♙c4 with similar compensation, as in the game with So.

21...♙xf5 22.♘e4 This has still been played in engine games, and this was the moment Radjabov got confirmation of his bluff working.

22...♙f8 This is possible, but Ding Liren couldn't remember that the move 22...c5 made a draw by force, something Radjabov knew about.

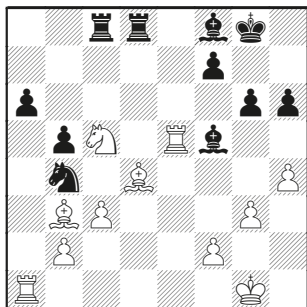
22...c5! 23.♘xd6 ♗xd6 24.♙e5 ♗d7 25.axb5 axb5 26.c4 ♘b4! 27.cxb5 c4 28.♙a4 ♘d3 29.♗e3 ♘xe5 30.♗xe5 g6 with a draw, as was pointed out by Radjabov after the game. Needless to say, to reproduce this line over the board one must refresh one's preparation before the game!



Radjabov (in the middle) and Ding Liern (right)

23. ♖c5 Now the game goes on and Black is under some pressure. This should still be drawable for Black, but it is not pleasant.

23... ♗b4 24. ♖e5 g6 25. axb5! cxb5 25... axb5?! allows 26. ♖a7.



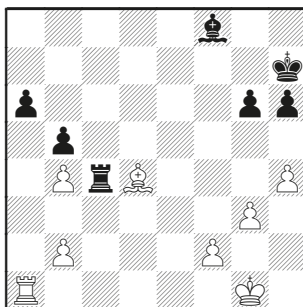
26. ♖e6! 26. ♖xa6 leads to a draw after 26... ♗c6 27. ♖xb5 ♗xd4 28. cxd4 ♖xd4 as the bishops compensate for the pawn deficit. Ding Liren already demonstrated this in his games with Karjakin and So.

26... ♗xe6 27. ♖xe6! fxe6 28. ♗xe6+ ♔h7 29. ♗xc8 This was still preparation for Radjabov,

so this must have been very unpleasant for Black. Now he faces another difficult choice and again he fails to choose the more resilient one.

29... ♖xc8?! 29... ♗c2! 30. ♖c1 ♗xd4 31. cxd4 leads to a pawn-down opposite-coloured endgame for Black, where his drawing chances are higher than in the game, even though of course White will play this for many, many moves.

30. cxb4 ♖c4



31. ♗f6! The first moment Radjabov spent more time on one move. This is a precise move.



Ding Liren

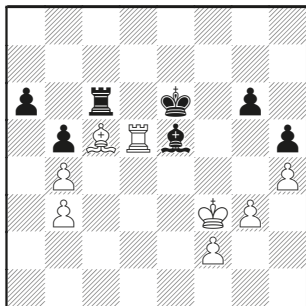
31.♙e5? may appear the same, but it isn't as after 31...♙g7 32.♙d6 ♖c6 Black will return the pawn by taking on b2.

31...♙g7 32.♙e7 ♖c6 33.♖a2 White has consolidated and keeps the extra pawn. Black is in for a long defence.

33...♙g8 34.♙c5 ♙f7 34...♙f8 was better from a practical perspective - after all, there will arise a rook endgame and there his chances are higher than in a position with the bishops on the board.

35.♙g2 ♙e6 36.b3 h5 37.♙f3 ♙f5 38.♖d2 ♙e5 39.♖d5 White has activated his rook and is going forward.

39...♙e6?



39...♙f6! was the only move, with the idea of 40.♙e4 ♖e6! and now the king should go to d3 41.♙d3 though after 41...♙f7 Black is still holding.

40.♙e4 Now the pawns start rolling and the game is over.

40...♙f6 41.f4 ♙c3 42.f5+ ♙f7 43.♖d7+ ♙g8 44.♙d6 Cutting off the rook from the defence of the kingside.

44...gxf5+ 45.♙xf5 ♙g7 46.♙g5! 46.♙g6?? ♙f8 would have been a bit too much to expect.

1-0

A fantastic achievement by Radjabov, the seeds of which were sown in his pre-game preparation and his decision to bluff with the opening choice. This was only possible because he wasn't really worried whether his opponent would find the forced draw or not - he was mentally prepared to lose the match (like all the previous ones), something he kept stressing in his interviews.

This mental attitude helped Radjabov in the tie-breaks, as it took away the pressure so he was able to control his nerves better. He won the two blitz games in dominant fashion.

After 7 years Radjabov will return to play a Candidates tournament. It will be different than in London, but will he really want to win it?

JEFFERY XIONG

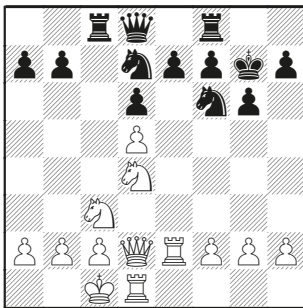
The young American (still 18 years old) has a bright future ahead. There are two factors why I think so - his strong character (as shown in his matches with Giri, Duda and Radjabov) and the blind faith his father has in him. As his father said in one interview - the law of success is blind faith in your children. The support of the closest family (even if it is one member, as in the cases of Kasparov and Fischer - Fischer's mother

did a lot for him in the beginning and always supported his career) is a factor all great champions have shared.

Xiong showed courage and self-confidence when playing these matches. He was going forward, ultra-aggressively, playing to beat the players from the elite. His path was impressive: he beat Igor Lysyj 2-0, Amin Tabatabaei (another Iranian super-talent) 3-1, Anish Giri 3.5-2.5, Jan-Krzysztof Duda 4.5-3.5 and only lost to Radjabov 0.5-1.5. His approach can be seen in the last game of the match with Giri.

Anish Giri - Jeffery Xiong

FIDE World Cup 2019 Khanty-Mansiysk RUS (3.6)



The position is dynamically balanced, but Xiong's next move is typical of his aggressive mindset.

15...♖e5!? Immediately starting activities. There was nothing wrong with 15...♞e8.

16.f4 ♖c4 17.♞d3 ♞b6 Again there was no need for this, as 17...♞e8 was perfectly fine. Objectively this is a mistake, but initiative and intent sometimes matter more, and not only in blitz.

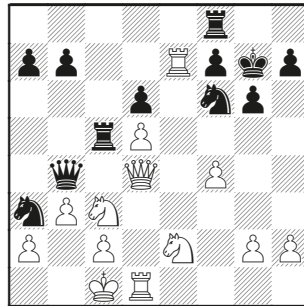
18.b3 ♖a3 19.♞xe7 ♞b4 20.♖de2 ♞c5 By sacrificing the pawn, Black won time to pile up his forces against White's queenside. Objectively, White is winning here, but to see the win in a blitz game while being attacked on the king turned out



Jeffery Xiong

too much even for such a superb calculator as Anish Giri.

21.♞d4



21.♞e3 ♞fc8 22.♞d3 is a regrouping suggested by the engine. Still, one has to see that after **22...♞xc3 23.♖xc3 ♞xc3 24.♞xc3 ♖xd5 25.♞c4!** is the move to win as after **25...♖xc4 26.♞d4+ ♖f8 27.♞e4** White wins material. Not at all a trivial line to see.

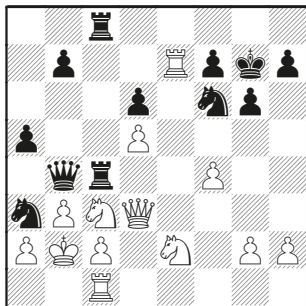
21...a5 22.♖b2? Too defensive-minded. Throughout the whole match Giri couldn't adapt to Xiong's aggressive play and here he pays the price. The engine gives 22 g4 as winning, but that would require a different mindset to play.

22...♞c4 Xiong could have repeated the position and made a draw by **22...♖c4**,

but he wants to win! He correctly saw (or sensed) that he cannot lose and that White needs to be careful now.

23. ♖d3 ♜fc8 Now it is becoming critical for White.

24. ♜c1?



The losing mistake. It turned out this was too much pressure for Giri (and probably not only in this game, but the match as a whole, being confronted by ultra-aggressive play).

24. ♖h3! was the saving move, the point being **24...b5 25. ♜xf7+!** and White forces a perpetual: **25...♙xf7 26. ♖e6+ ♙g7 27. ♖e7+ ♙g8 28. ♖e6+.**

24...b5 This again allows the same saving resource, but both players can be pardoned for missing it in a high-stakes blitz game. The move **24...h5** would have prevented it.

25.f5? Losing material.

25. ♖h3! was again the only move, and if Black wants to prevent the sacrifice on f7 by **25...♜8c7** then after **26. ♜xc7 ♜xc7 27. ♖d3** White is safe, as the exchange of one rook diminished Black's attacking potential.

25...♜xc3 26. ♜xc3 ♜xc3 27. ♖e2 27. ♖xc3 ♜c4+ loses the queen.

27...♜c4+ 28. ♙a1 ♜e5 The rest was played only because it was the last game of the match.



Anish Giri "outcalculated" by Xiong

29.fxg6 hxg6 30. ♜f1 ♖d4 31. ♙b1 ♜xd5 32. ♜d1 ♜d3 33. ♜xd3 ♜xd3 34. ♖xd3 ♖xd3 35. ♜xf7+ ♙xf7 36.cxd3 ♜f4

0-1

Few people can play in this manner successfully against world-class opposition. With a rating already over 2700 it will be intriguing to see how far Xiong can go.

Nihal Sarin

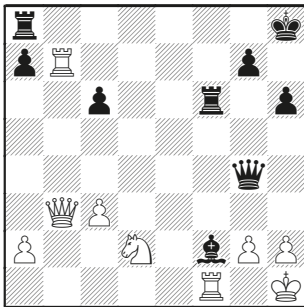


NIHAL SARIN

The Indian prodigy (born 2004) demonstrated both class and misfortune. After winning three games in a row (beating Cori 2-0 in Round 1 and suffocating Safarli in the first game of the match in Round 2) he was on the verge of qualifying as he was almost winning in the second game as well. Then this happened:

Eltaj Safarli - Sarin Nihal

FIDE World Cup 2019 Khanty-Mansiysk RUS (2.2)



Black is dominating. However, the next move was quite unexpected for Safarli.

32...♖g6?? This is difficult to explain.

After 32...♖e2 Black continues to play for a win even though a draw suffices to win the match.

33.♖xf2 Picking up the undefended bishop and defending mate. The game finished in 4 more moves.

1-0

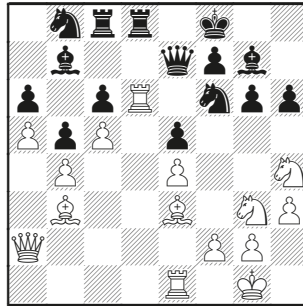
Following this shock, Safarli won the tie-break after his young opponent blundered another piece in the second game of the tie-break (this time in a must-win situation).

The Indian prodigies keep coming and Nihal Sarin is just one of them. In this World Cup he played superb chess as the

following position from the first game against Safarli clearly demonstrates:

Sarin Nihal – Eltaj Safarli

FIDE World Cup 2019 Khanty-Mansiysk RUS (2.1)



Black is completely paralysed with all the pieces on the board. Outplaying and paralysing strong opponents at such a young age is a mark of special talent. He finished the game with the convincing

31.♖gf5! gxf5 32.♖xf5 ♖c7 33.♖xg7 ♖xg7 34.♖xh6+! ♖xh6 35.♖xf6+ ♖g5 36.♖f5+ ♖h6 37.♖e2 With mate to follow.

1-0

Together with the somewhat older **Xu Xiangyi** (born 1999), who eliminated Bu Xiangzhi and Inarkiev before losing to Grischuk, **Kirill Alekseenko** (born 1997, only a year older than the already-established Vladislav Artemiev and Jan-Krzysztof Duda) eliminated Harikrishna 2-0 and put Ding Liren under severe pressure), **Alireza Firouzja** (born 2003), who beat Dubov in a great match and lost to Ding Liren, and the aforementioned **Jeffery Xiong** (born 2000) left a considerable mark on this year's World Cup.

The knock-out format of the World Cup gives a chance to the young and promising players to shine and they took their chances. Slowly, a new generation is coming.



Alexander Alekhine, Source: ajedrezspectacular.blogspot.com

Alexander **THE GREAT**

By GM Ray Keene OBE

Last month I showed how Botvinnik, by his sacrificial win against Portisch, heavily influenced a win of my own against the Austrian Grandmaster Karl Robatsch. In both games the rook sacrifice against the traditional weakness on f7 was the key to victory.

Another significant influence on my development as a player, rising from national junior champion, to British champion and then to Grandmaster, was two times world champion Alexander Alekhine. I found his collection of games from 1924-1937 to be of outstanding educational value. However, the particular game which inspired my win against Dutch Grandmaster Jan Timman came instead from Alekhine's earlier volume of best games from 1908-1923. The victim was Fritz Sämisch, who seemed to bring out the very best in such elite opponents as Alekhine and Nimzowitsch, but who also once defeated the legendary Capablanca.

This month's games by master (Alekhine) and pupil (myself) demonstrate a marked degree of resonance.

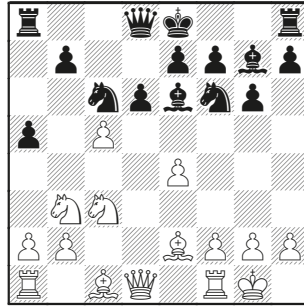
Alexander Alekhine - Fritz Sämisch

Vienna 1922, Maroczy Bind Sicilian

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♗xd4 g6 5.c4 ♕g7 6.♗b3 Nowadays 6.♕e3 is more commonly seen.

6...♗f6 7.♗c3 d6 8.♕e2 ♕e6 9.0-0 a5 There is some difference of opinion here, doubtless caused by confusion in translating algebraic notation into the old English descriptive, as to whether Black here playeda5 orh5. To me the former seems more logical, since Black would like to persecute White's knight on b3. In fact it makes little difference to the remainder of the game. Indeed, playingh5 seems pretty pointless, though similar ideas did crop up in games by the English Master Bird and the Hypermodern Hungarian Gyula Breyer.

10.c5

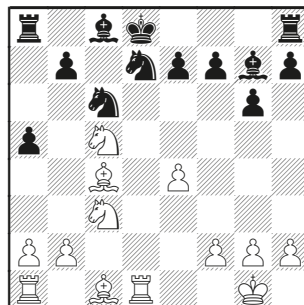


10...dxc5 Much better is 10...d5. Alekhine regarded the capture on c5 as the fatal error

11.♗xc5 ♕c8 If 11...♖c8 12.♗d5 0-0 13.♗xe6 fxe6 14.♗xf6+ Black now both loses valuable time and finds his king disrupted.

12.♖xd8+ ♔xd8 Or 12...♗xd8 13.♗d5 0-0 14.♗c7 ♖b8 15.♕f4 In this case Black does get to castle but his position suffers from other serious defects.

13.♖d1+ ♗d7 14.♕c4



14...♕xc3 Probably overlooking White's following coup, but by now the black situation was already desperate. For example: 14...♖f8 15.♗b5! a6 (15...b6 16.♗d5 bxc5 17.♗xc6 ♖b8 18.♕d2 and wins) 16.♕xf7 ♖xf7 17.♗e6+ ♗e8 18.♗bc7# As we shall see in the game,



an Alekhine speciality was to conjure up checkmates, even after simplification.

15.♙xf7 A typical Alekhine tactical shot. Suddenly mate is threatened.

15...♖c7 16.♘e6+ ♔b8 17.bxc3 ♘de5 18.♙f4 ♙xe6 19.♙xe6 ♖f8 20.♙g3

1-0

And here is the game where I profited from Alekhine's insights:

Raymond Keene - Jan Timman

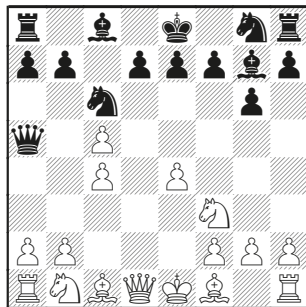
Hastings 1973/74 Hastings ENG (10),
06.01.1974

1.♘f3 g6 2.c4 ♙g7 3.d4 c5 Black issues an invitation to the Benoni Defence but White declines, preferring to remain in the paths of the Maroczy Bind Sicilian.

4.e4 Transposing into a line of the Sicilian Defence. Now after **4...cxd4 5.♘xd4 ♘c6 6.♙e3 ♘f6 7.♘c3 ♘g4 8.♖xg4 ♘xd4 9.♖d1 e5 10.♘b5 O-O 11.♖d2 ♖e7!? 12.♙e2!** White maintains some advantage since Black's d-pawn is very weak. Timman opts for a move favoured by Fischer and Tal.

4...♘c6 5.dxc5 Here it's less effective to play **5.d5 ♘d4 6.♘xd4 cxd4** since White's queen's knight cannot enter play at any good square.

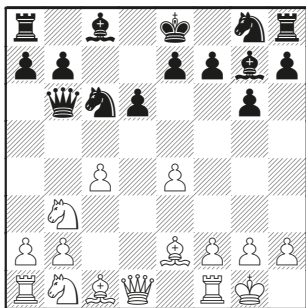
5...♖a5+



6.♟fd2! An idea of Petrosian's. The idea is to chase Black's queen with the king's knight and then develop the queen's knight on the excellent square c3.

6...♞xc5 7.♞b3 ♞b6 8.♙e2 Later I discovered the more accurate move order **8.♙e3! ♞c7 9.♞d2 ♞f6 10.♞c3 d6 11.♙e2 O-O 12.O-O ♞e5 13.♞d5 +/-** Keene - Sanz, Orense 1976.

8...d6 9.0-0



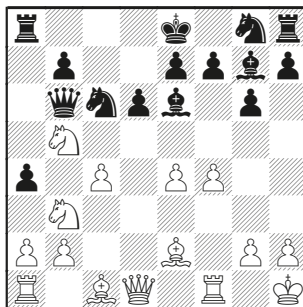
9...♞c7! A tremendous move which improves on the game Petrosian - Fischer, Zagreb 1970. Fischer played **9...♞f6** but after **10.♞c3** White clearly has an excellent game since his queen's knight is ready to jump into the key square d5 (c.f. Keene - Sanz). Timman delays ...♞f6 so that he can answer **10.♞c3** with **10...♙xc3 11.bxc3 ♞f6** and White's doubled c-pawns are severely exposed. In his turn White now has to find a good waiting move.

10.♙h1! Waiting, but useful too. It's a valuable precaution to tuck the king in the corner away from disturbing checks along the g1-a7 diagonal. **10...♙e6 11.f4 a5?** Much too optimistic. Black had to obstruct the further advance of White's f-pawn with **11...f5!**

12.♞a3 It's OK to develop the knight on this inferior square since Black has a seriously weakened b5.

12...a4 Continuing with his plan, but now all hell breaks loose.

13.♞b5 ♞b6 See the note to White's tenth move!



14.c5! Black confessed after the game that he had overlooked this move. White now obtains an irresistible attack by means of this pawn sacrifice.

14...♞d8 The line of least resistance. If Black tests the accuracy of White's idea: e.g. **14...dxc5 15.♞xc5! ♞xc5 (15...♞d8 16.♞xa4 wins a pawn) 16.♞c7+ ♞f8 17.♞xa8**, White wins the exchange but the knight in the corner is trapped. However, if Black goes after the knight **White's attack crashes through: 17...♞a5 18.f5 gxf5 19.exf5 ♙c8 20.♙f3 ♞f6 (or 20...♞xa8 21.♙xc6 bxc6 22.♞d8 mate) 21.♙xc6 bxc6 22.♙f4 ♞xa8 23.♞d8+ ♞e8 24.f6 ♙xf6 25.♙h6+ ♙g7 26.♞a1** when Black is finished, viz. **26...♞b7 27.♞xe7!**

15.cxd6! This sacrifice still holds. White's attack virtually conducts itself.

15...axb3 16.♞c7+ ♞f8 17.♞xa8 ♞xa8 18.f5 Forwards all the time. White's pieces simply occupy logical and strong squares and Black can resign.

18...gxf5 19.exf5 ♙d7 20.dxe7+ ♞e8 21.♙c4 Threatening **22.♙xf7+** and **23.♞xd7.**

21...♞e5 22.♙xb3 ♞a6 23.♙f4 ♞h6 24.♞d5 Black is quite powerless against White's dominating centralisation.

24...♞hg4 25.♙xe5 ♞xe5 26.♞fe1 There is no defence to **27.♞xe5** and **28.♞xf7#**, 1-0.

GUERNSEY INTERNATIONAL CHESS 2019

VICTORY FOR MARK HEBDEN

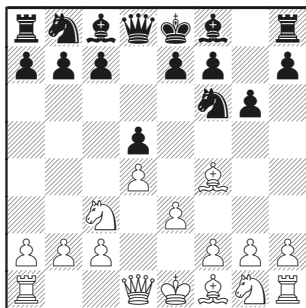
By IM Shaun Taulbut

The 45th Guernsey Open was held from the 20th to the 26th October at the Peninsula Hotel, Guernsey. The tournament was won by Grandmaster Mark Hebden. The following two wins were instrumental in deciding the first prize, first a fluctuating win against Nigel Povah.

Nigel Povah – Mark Hebden

45th Guernsey Open 2019 Vale GCI (4.1)

1.d4 ♘f6 2.♗f4 g6 3.♘c3 d5 4.e3



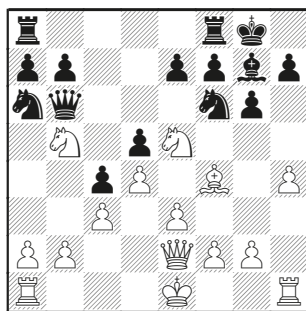
Nigel Povah plays a similar opening to that favoured by Mark Hebden where White can play for a kingside attack.

4...♗g7 5.h4 An aggressive try; White aims to advance with h5.

5...c5 Black counters in the centre; blocking the position with 5...h5 6.♘f3 0-0 7.♙d2 is slightly better for White.

6.♘b5 The alternatives are 6.dxc5 0-0 7.♗ge2 ♙a5; or 6.♘f3 ♘c6; in both cases White is somewhat better.

6...♘a6 7.c3 ♗g4 8.♗e2 ♗xe2 9.♙xe2 0-0 10.♘f3 ♙b6 11.♘e5 c4

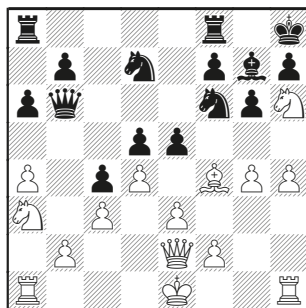


Black chooses to block the position and push back the knight on b5.

12.a4 ♘b8 Repositioning the knight to better squares and allowing the knight on b5 to be pushed back.

13.♘g4 ♘bd7 14.♘h6+ ♔h8 15.g4 White aims to break through with h5 but this should not succeed if Black is careful.

15...a6 16.♘a3 e5



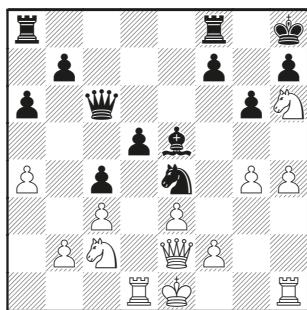
A vigorous counter: sacrificing a pawn to open the centre, which favours Black.

The alternative is 16...♖ae8 17.f3 e5.

17.dxe5 ♘e4 18.♖d1 ♖c6 18...♗e6 is good eg 19.♗c2 ♗xe5 20.♗d4 ♖d7 21.♗xe5 ♗xe5 22.♗f3 ♗g7 23.g5 ♖ad8 with an edge for Black.

19.♗c2 ♗xe5 20.♗xe5 If 20.♗b4 ♖e6 21.♗xe5 ♖xe5 22.g5 ♖ad8 with advantage to Black.

20...♗xe5 Now White decides to win the pawn on d5.



21.♗b4 ♖e6 22.♗xd5 ♗g7 Not the best move. The alternative was 22...♖ad8 is very strong eg 23.♖xc4 (23.♗f4 ♖xd1+ 24.♗xd1 ♗xf4 25.exf4 ♖d6+ 26.♗e1 ♖xf4 27.♖e3 ♖xe3+ 28.fxe3 ♗g7 29.g5 f5 and Black is much better; or 23.♗b4 ♗xc3+ 24.bxc3 ♗xc3 25.♖xd8 ♖xd8 26.♖f3 ♖d1+ 27.♖xd1 ♗xd1 28.♗xd1 a5 29.♗e2 axb4 is winning) 23...♗g7 24.g5 ♗xh6 25.gxh6 ♗f6 is much better for Black as the knight cannot be defended easily, only by 26.e4 when Black is winning after 26...♗xe4.

23.g5 ♖ac8 24.♗f4 ♖c6 25.0-0 f6 26.♖g4 ♖ce8 27.♖d7 ♖xd7 28.♖xd7 fxg5 29.hxg5 ♗xg5 30.♗g4 ♖f7 White has a slight edge with his more active pieces.

31.♖fd1 ♗g8 32.♖d8 ♗f8 33.♗g2 ♖c7 34.♖xe8+ ♗xe8 35.♗d5 ♖c6 36.f4 ♗e4 37.♗b4 ♖b6 Black has pressure on the pawn on b2, which is good for him and pressures White into a mistake.

38.♖d5 Black now has a combination winning White's queenside pawns, which decides the game.

38...♗xc3 39.bxc3 ♗xc3 40.♗xa6 After 40.♗c2 ♖b2; or 40.♗d3 cxd3 41.♖xd3 ♗g7 Black has a sound extra pawn.

40...bxa6 41.♖c5 ♖b4 42.a5 ♖a4 43.♖c6 ♗xa5 44.♖xa6 c3 45.♗e5 c2 46.♗d3 ♖a3 47.♗c1 ♗b4 If White plays 48.♖c6 ♖c3 wins as, after an exchange of rooks, White's knight is lost for the black pawn.

0-1

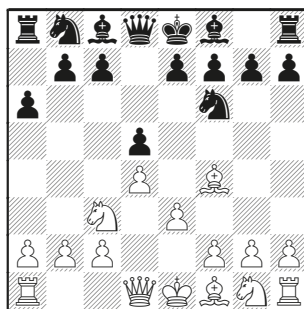
The following win against Chris Baker featured a similar opening.

Mark Hebden – Chris W Baker

45th Guernsey Open 2019 Vale GCI (5.1)

1.d4 d5 2.♗c3 ♗f6 3.♗f4 a6 Black chooses to prevent ♗b5 before playing c5.

4.e3

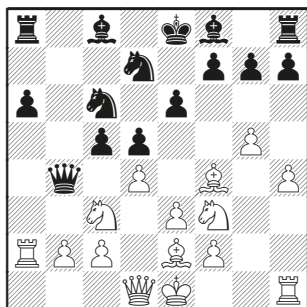


4...e6 5.g4 The bayonet attack makes it difficult for Black to castle kingside.

5...c5 5...♗b4 is worth consideration.

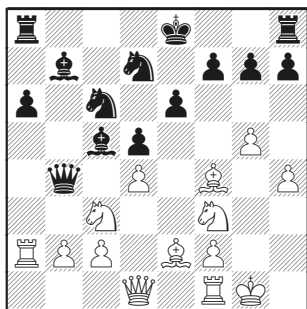
6.g5 ♗fd7 7.h4 ♗c6 8.♗f3 ♖a5 8...♖b6 is best eg 9.a3 cxd4 10.exd4 ♗e7.

9.a3 b5 10.♗e2 b4 11.axb4 ♖xb4 12.♖a2



White is slightly better with his space advantage on the kingside.

12...cxd4 13.exd4 ♖b7 14.0-0 ♗c5



A mistake, hoping to effect an exchange of bishops after 15 dxc5 ♗xf4; but White now has a tactical win based on trapping the black queen.

15.♗b5 axb5 16.c3 ♖xa2 17.cxb4 ♗xb4 18.♗xb5 ♖a5 After 18...♖b2 19.♗c1 ♖a2 20.♗b3 is winning as Black will lose the bishop on b4 after White exchanges on c6.

19.♗xc6 ♗xc6 20.♗d2 ♗xd2 21.♗xd2 ♖a6 22.♗b4 Preventing Black from castling puts White in the driving seat.

22...f6 23.♖e1 ♗f7 24.h5 ♖b8 25.♗d6 ♗b5 26.♗c7 ♗e7 27.h6 White undermines the defences of the pawn chain controlling e5 in order to get his knight on f3 into play.

27...♖g8 28.♗h2 ♗d3 29.hxg7 ♖xg7 30.gxf6+ ♗xf6 31.♗d8+ ♗f5 32.♗e5 ♗b5 33.♗xd7 White wins the rook on g7 or checkmates Black.

1-0

45TH GUERNSEY OPEN 2019 VALE GCI 20TH OCT 2019 - 26TH OCT 2019 LEADING FINAL ROUND 7 STANDINGS:

Rk	SNo		FED	Rtg	Pts	TB1	TB2	TB3
1	1	Hebden Mark L	ENG	2427	7.0	31.0	21.5	31.00
2	2	Povah Nigel E	ENG	2301	6.0	29.5	21.0	22.50
3	6	Bianco Valerio	ITA	2088	5.0	31.5	21.0	18.50
4	13	Wager John D	ENG	2013	5.0	27.5	18.5	18.50
5	18	Heppell Ian N	ENG	1995	4.5	26.5	17.5	14.00
6	24	Kwossek Georg	GER	1984	4.5	25.0	19.0	15.25
7	21	Prins Jan	NED	1987	4.5	20.5	15.0	13.50
8	3	Baker Chris W	ENG	2245	4.0	33.0	22.5	16.75
9	12	Pleasants Allan J	WLS	2019	4.0	29.5	19.5	13.25
10	9	Van Den Boogaart Jan Maarten	NED	2039	4.0	27.0	19.0	11.50
11	10	Dilleigh Stephen P	ENG	2037	4.0	26.5	17.0	12.50
12	11	Thurlow Kevin J	ENG	2021	4.0	25.5	18.5	13.50
13	22	Kraft Karl-Heinz Prof. Dr.	GER	1986	4.0	24.0	17.5	13.50
14	19	Purdon Colin	ENG	1993	4.0	23.5	17.5	12.50

THE 23RD 4NCL CONGRESS SOUTH NORMANTON

JOHN MERRIMAN AHEAD OF GMS

By IM Shaun Taulbut

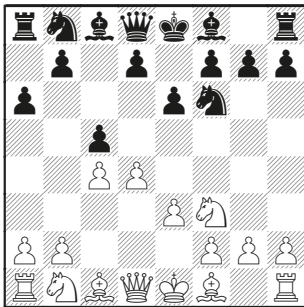
The 23rd 4NCL Congress at South Normanton was won by John Merriman ahead of Grandmasters Arkell and Hebden.

Here are two wins from John Merriman including the last round win against Mark Hebden which decided first prize.

Mark Hebden – John Merriman

23rd 4NCL Congress 2019
South Normanton ENG (5.1)

1.d4 e6 2.♘f3 ♘f6 3.e3 c5 4.c4 a6



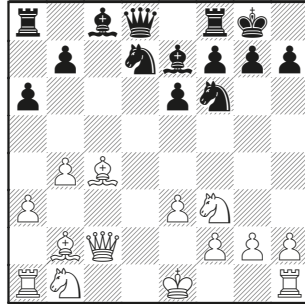
Black waits, inviting White to advance in the centre with d5, and prepares a later...b5.

5.a3 5.d5 b5 6.♘c3 b4 7.♘a4 ♖b7 is critical when White must sacrifice a pawn to retain the initiative - eg 8.♙d3 exd5 9.cxd5 ♙xd5 10.e4 ♙e6 11.e5 with good compensation for White.

5...d5 6.dxc5 ♙xc5 7.b4 ♙e7 8.♙b2 0-0 9.♙c2 9.cxd5 exd5 is slightly better for White, because of the isolated d-pawn, and is best.

9...dxc4 This forces White to spend a move recapturing on c4.

10.♙xc4 ♘bd7



Black has equality as he plans to play ...b5 and then ...♙b7 so White tries to disrupt this plan.

11.♙d4 11.0-0 b5 12.♙b3 ♙b7 13.♙e2 ♙c8 14.♘bd2 ♙b6 15.♙fc1 ♙xc1+ 16.♙xc1 ♙c8, with equality, is best.

11...♘b6

Black had good alternatives here:

- a) 11...b5 12.♘c6 ♙e8 13.♙b3 ♙b7 14.♘xe7+ ♙xe7 15.0-0 ♙ac8 16.♘c3 ♘e5 17.♙e2 ♘c4: Black is better;
- b) 11...♘e5 12.♙e2 ♙d7 13.0-0 ♙c8 14.♙b3 ♙c7 with an edge for Black.

12.♙b3 ♙d7 12...e5 13.♘f5 g6 14.♘xe7+ ♙xe7 15.♙c5 ♙xc5 16.bxc5 ♘bd7 is also slightly better for Black.

13.♘d2 13.0-0 ♙c8 14.♘c3 ♘c4 with a slightly better position for Black, who is safer.

13...♙c8 14.♙d1 e5 The key move; Black drives away the knight, opening up the position.

15.♘4f3 e4 Black presses ahead and the pawn on e4 gives Black a space advantage!

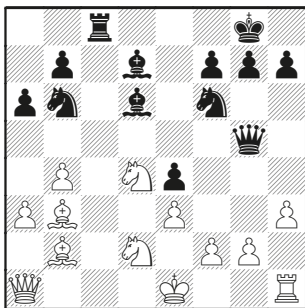
16.♟d4 16.♟e5 ♖b5 is slightly better for Black as White cannot castle kingside.

16...♟d6 Black lines up the bishop against h2 so it is potentially difficult for White to castle kingside.

17.h3 White can castle with 17.0-0, then if 17...♟xh2+ (17...♟e7 18.♞c1 ♟e5 19.g3 ♟g4 is slightly better for Black) 18.♟xh2 ♟g4+ 19.♟g1 ♟h4 20.♟2f3 exf3 21.♟xf3 ♟h6 22.♟d4 with an advantage for White. White tries to prevent Black from forcing a weakness but runs into trouble.

17...♟e7 Now White is in difficulties as 0-0 is met by ...♟e5 and White cannot play g3 without losing the pawn on h3.

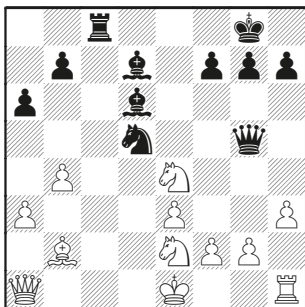
18.♞c1 ♟e5 19.♟xc8 ♞xc8 20.♟a1 ♟g5



Black goes for the jugular, attacking the weakness on g2.

21.♟e2 If 21.g3 ♟xg3 22.♞g1 ♟xe3+ wins.

21...♟bd5 22.♟xd5 ♟xd5 23.♟xe4



If 23.g3 ♟xe3 24.fxe3 ♟xg3+ 25.♟f1 ♟f5+ 26.♟f4 ♟xf4 is winning.

23...♟xg2 Not fearing the attack on g7.

24.♟f6+ If 24.♞g1 ♟xe4 25.♞xg7+ ♟f8 26.♟d1 ♞c2 is winning.

24...♟xf6 25.♞g1 ♟f3 26.♟xf6 ♞c2 27.♟d1 White had no good defence for if 27.♞xg7+ ♟f8 28.♟d1 ♟xf6 is winning: now Black wins two pieces for a rook.

27...♞xe2+ 28.♟xe2 ♟xf6 29.♟d3 ♟b5 30.♟d4 ♟e5 31.♟d5 g6 32.f4 ♟c3+ 33.♟d1 ♟xb4 34.axb4 If 34.♟d4 ♟xd4+ 35.exd4 ♟xa3 wins.

34...♟a1+ 35.♟d2 ♟xg1 36.♟e5 ♟g2+ 37.♟c3 ♟c6+ 38.♟b2 ♟e6 39.♟d4 ♟xh3 40.♟d8+ ♟g7 41.♟d4+ f6 42.♟c3 ♟g2+ 43.♟a3 ♟c6

0-1

The next win features a popular line of the Nimzo-Indian.

**23RD 4NCL CONGRESS 2019
SOUTH NORMANTON ENG
4TH OCT 2019 - 6TH OCT 2019
LEADING FINAL ROUND 5 STANDINGS:**

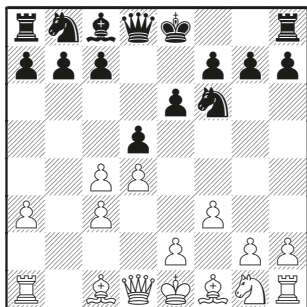
Rk	SNo		Ti	Rtg	Pts
1	8	Merriman John		2201	4.5
2	13	Burrows Martin P		2153	4.0
3	2	Arkell Keith C	GM	2442	3.5
	3	Hebden Mark L	GM	2427	3.5
	5	Willow Jonah B	FM	2327	3.5
	7	Stepanyan Henrik		2207	3.5
	10	Verma Aditya		2172	3.5
	15	Turner Max N		2125	3.5
	18	Makkar Rajat	CM	2071	3.5
	25	Gardiner Eric D		1960	3.5

Richard Webster – John Merriman

23rd 4NCL Congress 2019 (3.6)

1.d4 e6 2.c4 ♘f6 3.♗c3 ♙b4 4.f3 This has become very popular, as in Aronian-Carlsen Isle of Man 2019.

4...d5 5.a3 ♙xc3+ 6.bxc3



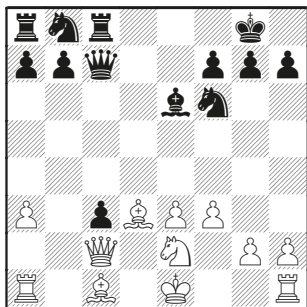
6...c5 7.e3 0-0 8.♙d3 ♖c7 A key move; attacking down the c-file disrupts White.

9.cxd5 After 9.♖c2 ♘c6 10.cxd5 exd5 11.dxc5 ♘e5 12.♗e2 ♘xd3+ 13.♖xd3 ♘d7 14.♗f4 ♘xc5 15.♖d1 ♙e6 16.0-0 with a slight edge for Black.

9...cxd4 Black attacks c3 and obtains a dangerous passed pawn on c3.

10.♗e2 dxc3 11.dxe6 11.d6 ♖c5 12.♖c2 ♘bd7 13.♖xc3 ♖xd6 14.♙b2 ♘c5 15.♗d1 ♖c7 16.♙b1 b6 17.♗g3 ♗d8 18.♗xd8+ ♖xd8 with a slight advantage for Black.

11...♙xe6 12.♖c2 ♖c8



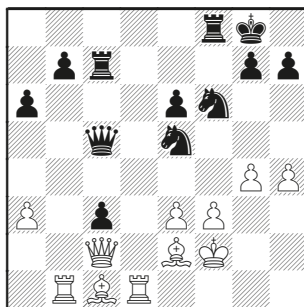
Defending the advanced pawn stops White from developing the bishop on c1.

13.g4 ♖a5 14.♗b1 a6 15.♗f2 After 15.♗xb7 ♖d5 16.♗b4 ♘c6 17.♗f4 ♘e5 with a decisive advantage to Black.

15...♘bd7 16.♗f4 If 16.♗xb7 then 16...♘e5 is good.

16...♖c7 17.h4 ♘e5 18.♘xe6 After 18.g5 ♘xd3+ 19.♖xd3 ♘d7 Black is on top.

18...fxe6 19.♙e2 ♖c5 20.♗d1 ♗f8



Black plans to break into the white kingside with a knight sacrifice; the white bishop on c1 is still at home.

21.♙g3 If 21.♙g2 ♘d5 22.♗d4 ♖e7 23.g5 ♖f7 24.f4 ♘g6 25.h5 ♘h4+ 26.♙h3 ♘f5 27.♗d3 ♗c4 28.♙g4 b5 is strong.

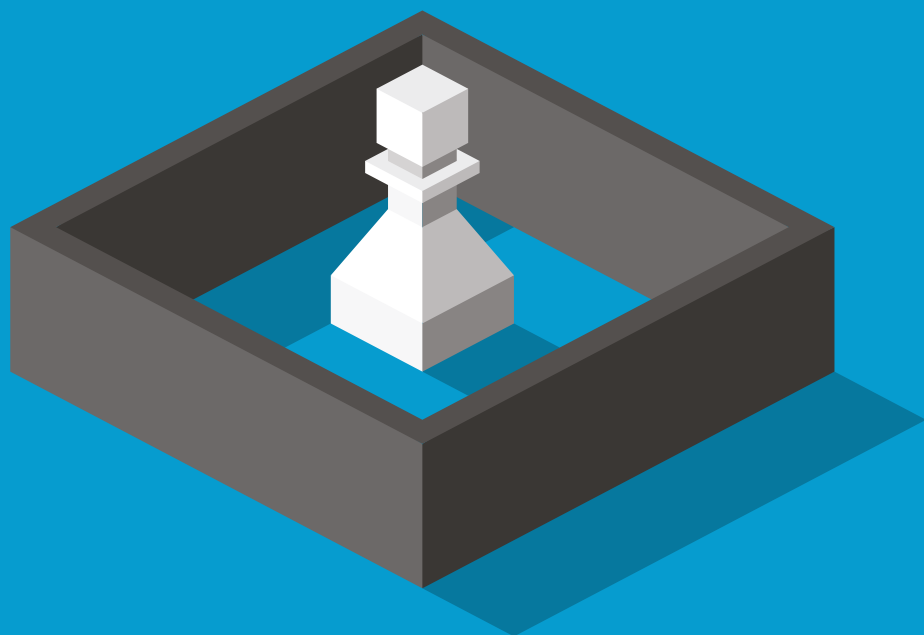
21...♘exg4 22.fxg4 ♖e5+ 23.♙h3 Also if 23.♙g2 ♘e4 24.♙f3 ♖g3+ wins.

23...♘e4 24.♗g1 ♗f2 25.♗g2 ♗xg2 26.♙xg2 ♖g3+ 27.♙h1 ♘f2#

0-1



Openings for Amateurs



Getting around the **BERLIN WALL**

By Pete Tamburro, ptamburro@aol.com

Thirty years ago, in November 1989, the Berlin wall - a symbol of a divided country (Germany) and a divided Europe, was breached. This led to the end of communism in Europe and the dissolution of the Soviet Empire. This event had impact not only on the global political map but, also, on the chess world with many new chess nations (Armenia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan, to name a few) emerging from the one mighty USSR. In this article, however, we will talk about the chess Berlin Wall, favoured by many top players in the world. (BCM Editor, Milan Dinic)

The Berlin Wall has been so successful at GM levels that we find many players of the white pieces heading into slow systems resembling the Italian Game or Steinitz Ruy

Lopez approaches. If you want to win you have to give yourself chances in a middle game. Years ago, I ran across a game where Halprin came up with a vicious attack against Pillsbury, who managed to draw. I had thought then that it would be worth a try against the non-Pillsburys I might meet. Then, Leonard Barden, in The Ruy Lopez over 50 years ago recommended the same line. In 1991, Gary Lane, in The Ruy Lopez for the Tournament Player, presented it as a possibility. At worst, it's a draw, and yet it gives winning chances in a middle game. Even the endgame can get tricky as our game demonstrates. The irony of this game is that the victim is none other than Vladimir Kramnik, who did so much to revive the Berlin Wall.

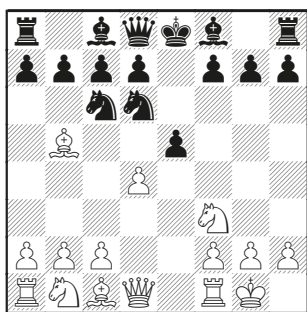
Dimitry Andreikin - Vladimir Kramnik

66th Russian Championship (3), 2013

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♙b5 ♘f6 4.0-0 A good practical try is going into the Four Knights with 4.Nc3 because you can get an equal game with lots of chances for both sides in the main line or even against 4...♘d4 with 5.0-0, which I covered in my *Openings for Amateurs* book. The Four Knights archive of games in the late 19th and early 20th century repays those who study its ins and outs, which few do any more. 4.♘c3.

4...♘xe4 I would be remiss if I neglected to warn you to have at least one prepared line against the “Fishing Pole.” The knight can’t be taken: 4...♘g4 5.h3 h5 6.hxg4 hxg4 7.♙xc6 dxc6 8.g3 gxf3 9.♖xf3 ♖d7 10.♗g2 ♗g4 11.d3 ♗h5 12.♙e3 ♙h3 13.♗h2 ♙xf1 There are several good lines against it. Check your Youtube channels!

5.d4 ♘d6

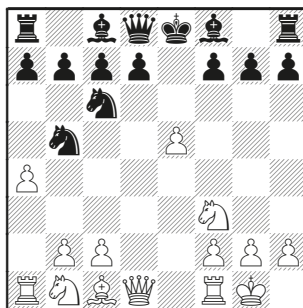


The alternative 5...♙e7 6.♖e2 ♘d6 7.♙xc6 bxc6 8.dxe5 gives White a slight edge wherever the knight goes. No easy draw here because of the three black pawn islands and White’s free and active development.

6.dxe5 We are all familiar with the umpteen million draws here with the queen exchange. However, that is at GM levels. If you’re an amateur with good endgame skills, you might try to win with the kingside pawn majority à la Lasker. Going for a middle game rather

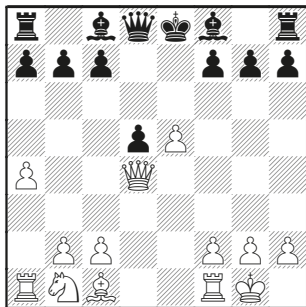
than straight to an endgame is what we recommend here. Might as well challenge your opponent in all three phases of the game. 6.♙xc6 dxc6 7.dxe5 ♘f5 8.♗xd8+ (8.♗e2 ♘d4=) 8...♙xd8 is for those supremely confident in their endgame skills.

6...♘xb5 7.a4



7...♘bd4! 7...♘d6 8.♙g5! (8.exd6 ♙xd6 9.♖e1+ (9.♙g5? h6 10.♖e1+ ♙e7 with no compensation for the pawn.) 9...♙e7 10.♘c3 0-0 11.♘d5 ♙f6 12.♖a3 d6 13.♖ae3 ♙e6 14.♘f4 ♙f5 and White can only repeat with ♘d5.) 8...f6 9.♖e1 ♙e7 (9...♘xe5 10.♘xe5 ♙e7 11.♙xf6+-) 10.exd6 cxd6 11.♙f4±; 7...d6 J. Friedel, in annotating this game for Chessbase, said this line was “for folk who are less sound in the head.” A wry hyperbole, but he has a point. This is the notorious Halprin-Pillsbury line. You must be prepared to play from either side. 8.e6! (8.axb5 ♘xe5 9.♖e1 ♙e7 10.♘xe5 dxe5 11.♗xd8+ ♙xd8 12.♖xe5+=) 8...fxe6 (8...♙xe6?! 9.axb5 ♘e5 10.♘d4 ♙d7 11.f4) 9.axb5 ♘e7 10.♘c3 ♘g6?! What Pillsbury played. 11.♗d4! What Halprin didn’t play. 11...♙d7 12.h4 (12.♖e1 e5 13.♗c4 ♙e7 14.♘d5 c6 15.bxc6 bxc6 16.♘xe7 ♗xe7 17.♖a6 ♗e6 18.♘d2) 12...♗c8 (12...e5 13.♗c4) 13.♖e1 h6 14.h5 ♘e7 and White has the freer game and several good possibilities with 15.♗d3 or 15.♖xa7 or 15.♘h4 or 15.♗c4.

8.♘xd4 ♘xd4 9.♗xd4 d5



Black has chosen sanity over chaos. He has the two bishops and a pawn in the centre. White is a little ahead in development and might have dreams of some kingside activity with f4.

10.exd6 Gary Lane gave the game Kindermann-Hickl, Bern, 1990, as his featured game in this line. It's ideal for what we have been talking about. Let's get some middle game activity going with a pawn sacrifice: 10.♖c3 c6 11.a5 To prevent ♖b6. (*Barden had recommended 11.♙e3 ♙f5 12.f4 "with a strong grip on the black squares".*) 11...♙f5 12.f4 ♙xc2 13.f5 and White has obvious compensation for the pawn. The chances are equal. The big question for Black will be "Where do I want my king?"

10...♖xd6 11.♖e3+ Friedel noted that he didn't consider this a serious try for advantage, and that he had expected ♖e4+ with both players going home early. However, it was enough to give Kramnik some difficulties without any risk. The idea of the queen move to e3 is that it allows mobility across the third rank to go to g3, c3 or b3, depending on what Black does with his king.

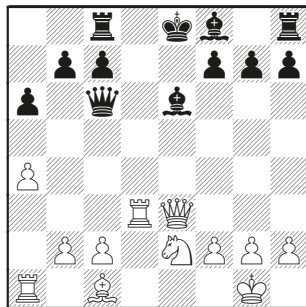
11...♙e6 11...♙e7 12.♖c3 0-0 13.♖b5 ♖d8 14.♖g3 ♙f5 15.♙h6 ♙g6 16.♖fd1 ♖c8 17.♙f4 and White stays pesky, but there's no knockout blow.

12.♖c3 a6 13.♖d1 ♖c6 14.♖d3 Also possible is 14.♖d4 f6 15.♙e3 ♖f7 16.♖h4 h5 and we're in a bit of a brawl.

14...♖c8 Friedel wonders what Andreikin had ready for 14...♙e7 If I had to guess,

it would be the same Ne2 idea he uses in the game.

15.♖e2

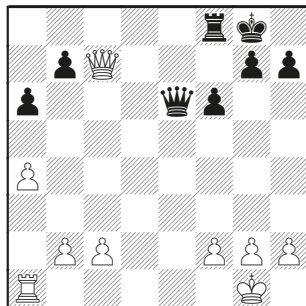


Since Black has committed his king to being on the kingside, White starts assembling his troops over there.

15...♙c5 16.♖g3 f6 17.♙e3 White would only draw with 17.b4 ♙d6 (*17...♙xb4?? 18.♖d4 ♙d6 19.♙f4 ♙xf4 20.♖xf4+-*) 18.♙f4 ♙xf4 19.♖xf4 0-0 20.b5 axb5 21.axb5 ♖b6 22.♖xe6 ♖xe6 23.h3 ♖c4 24.♖a7 ♖xb5 25.♖b3 ♖c6 26.♖xb7 ♖xc2 27.♖xc7 ♖xc7 28.♖xc7 ♖b1+ 29.♖h2 ♖f7; 17.♖xg7?? ♖g8.

17...♙d6 18.♙f4 ♙xf4 19.♖xf4 0-0 20.♖c3! White can combine attack and defence with 20.♖xe6 ♖xe6 21.h4 but the text move makes a specific threat and is thus more useful.

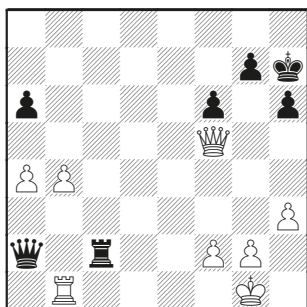
20...♖d6 21.♖xe6 ♖xe6 22.♖xc7 ♖xc7 23.♖xc7



And wins a pawn! Still, Black and White get into an exchange frenzy here. The bottom line is that White plays for a win and Black hopes for a draw with just major pieces on the board.

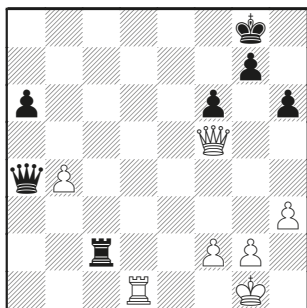
23...♖c8 24.♙xb7 ♖xc2 25.h3 ♙e2 26.♙b8+ ♖f7 27.♙a7+ ♖g8 Maybe 27...♖g6, considering what follows in the game.

28.b4 h6 29.♙b8+ ♖h7 30.♙f4 ♙e6 31.♙d4 ♙e2 32.♙f4 ♙e6 33.♖b1 ♙a2 34.♙f5+.



White now has a decisive advantage based on the b-pawn's future.

34...♖g8 35.♖d1 ♙xa4.



36.♖d8+!? Maybe it was a time pressure issue, but the following would have saved a lot of time: 36.b5! axb5 (36...♙xb5 37.♖d8+ ♖f7 38.♙h5+ g6 39.♙d5+ ♖g7 40.♙g8#).

36...♖f7 37.♙d5+ ♖g6 38.♙d3+ ♖f7 39.♖d7+ ♖e8 40.♖d8+ ♖f7 41.♖d7+ ♖e8 42.♖xg7 42.♖d8+ ♖f7 43.♙d5+ ♖g6 44.♙d1 ♙c6 45.♙g4+ ♖f7 46.♖d7+ ♖e8 47.♖xg7 should do it. However, White makes a decision to decimate Black's kingside pawns in exchange for the once promising b-pawn. It works. Just takes a little longer.

42...♙a1+ 43.♖h2 ♙e5+ 44.♙g3 ♙xg3+ 45.♖xg3 ♖b2 46.♖b7 ♖f8 47.♖h7 ♖b3+ 48.f3 ♖xb4 49.♖xh6 ♖g7 50.♖h5 ♖a4 51.h4± This is an openings column, so we won't comment further, but it is an instructional rook and pawn ending worth playing out as it turns into a not uncommon finish with rook and two pawns vs. rook.

51...♖g6 52.♖c5 a5 53.h5+ ♖g7 54.f4 ♖a2 55.♖f3 a4 56.♖a5 a3 57.g4 ♖h6 58.♖a6 ♖g7 59.♖a7+ ♖g8 60.♖e4 ♖g2 61.♖f5 a2 62.h6 ♖h8 63.g5 fxg5 64.fxg5 ♖b2 65.♖g6 ♖b6+ 66.♖h5 ♖b5 67.♖xa2 ♖h7 68.♖a7+ ♖g8 69.♖g7+ ♖h8 70.♖f7 ♖g8 71.♖f6 ♖h7 72.♖e6 ♖a5 73.♖e7+ ♖g8 74.♖g6 ♖a6+ 75.♖f5 ♖a1 76.g6 ♖f1+ 77.♖e5 ♖e1+ 78.♖d6 ♖d1+ 79.♖c5 ♖c1+ 80.♖b4 ♖c8 81.♖b5 ♖a8 82.♖b6 ♖b8+ 83.♖a7 ♖d8 84.♖b7

1-0

What can we say? Has White scaled or gone around the Berlin Wall? Let's just say there are some interesting paths to tread against your confident Berlin Wall builder in your next weekend tournament.

QUOTES AND QUERIES

THEORETICAL NOVELTIES *from the past*

By Alan Smith

6155 A theoretical novelty is a new move that changes the way we look at and evaluate a position. They range from game changers, such as Captain Evans' 4.b4!? in the Giuoco Piano, to subtle refinements, such as the Keres variation of the Reti 1.♘f3 d5 2.g3 ♘g4 3.♘g2 ♘d7.

Here are some examples of theoretical novelties. Two feature dramatic turnarounds as the new moves catch strong British players on the hop.

The first game comes from a critical juncture of the seventh British Championship in 1910. At the start of round eight Wainwright was one of a group of five players in contention for the title. He repeated a line Blackburne had used to defeat Dr Smith in round six, but found too late that Dr Smith had a substantial improvement up his sleeve.

**Dr Stephen Francis Smith –
George Edward Wainwright**

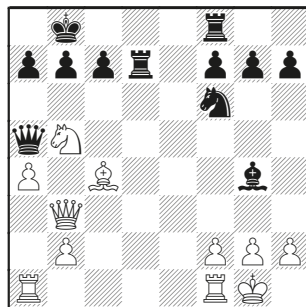
BCF Championship, Oxford 1910

1.e4 e5 2.d4 exd4 3.c3 d5 4.exd5 ♗xd5 5.cxd4 ♘c6 6.♘f3 ♘g4 The game has transposed into a Goring Gambit Declined.

7.♘e2 ♘f6 8.♘c3 ♗a5 9.0–0 0–0–0 10.♘e3 ♘c5 11.♗b3 White has other moves too, Penrose -Prameshuber Munich Olympiad 1958 varied with 11.a3.

11...♘xd4 12.♘xd4 ♘xd4 13.♘xd4 ♗xd4 14.♘c4 ♗f8 15.♘b5! Improving on Dr. S.F.Smith - J.H.Blackburne Oxford 1910 continued 15.♗ac1 ♘d7 16.♘b5 ♘b8 17.♗g3 ♗b6 and 0-1.

15...♗d7 16.a4 ♘b8

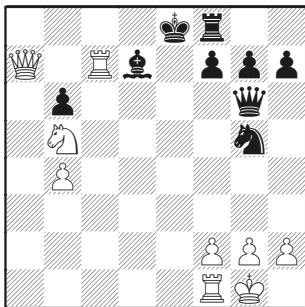


Black starts to appreciate his problems, the reflex 16...a6?? loses to 17.♘a7+! ♘b8? 18.♘c6+ ,the alternative 17...♘d8 18.♗xb7 offers little hope.

17.♗a3! ♗dd8 18.b4 ♗b6 19.♗ac1 ♘e4? 19...a6 is imperative, but white is still on top after 20.♘c3 ♗d6 21.a5 to be followed by ♗b3 and b5.

20.a5 ♗g6 21.♗e3 b6 22.axb6 axb6 23.♗a3 ♘c8 24.♘d5!?! This wins, but as Hoffer pointed out in the *Field* 24.♘e6+! is instantly decisive.

24...♘d7 25.♗xc7+ ♘e8 26.♘c6+ ♗d7 27.♘xd7+ ♘xd7 28.♗a7 ♘g5



Black sets a little trap if white plays 29.♖xd7?? then 29.♘h3+! 30.♙h1 ♘f2+ allows black to escape with a draw.

29.♖e1+!

1-0

Yorkshire Post, 24th August 1910

6158 Reuben Fine won a dashing attacking game in round six at Hastings 1936-37 chasing Feigin's king all the way up the board into a mating net. Soon afterwards Arthur Reynolds repeated this when he faced British champion William Winter at Birmingham 1937. What he had not realized is that Winter had annotated the game in his reports in the *Manchester Guardian*. He had analysed the variation and had an improvement, suggested by Alekhine, at the ready.

William Winter – Arthur Reynolds

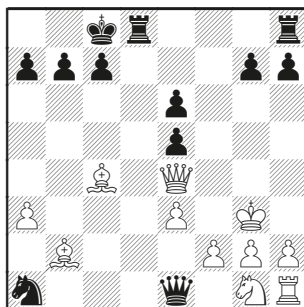
Birmingham 1937

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♙c3 ♙b4 4.♖c2 d5 5.a3 ♙xc3+ 6.♖xc3 ♘e4 7.♖c2 ♘c6 8.e3 e5 This was introduced in the game Vidmar - Alekhine San Remo 1930.

9.cxd5 ♖xd5 10.♙c4 ♖a5+ 11.b4 11.♙f1? does not work 11...♙f5! 12.♙d3 ♘b4 13.axb4 ♖xa1 14.♙xe4 ♙xe4 15.♖xe4 ♖xc1+.

11...♘xb4 12.♖xe4 ♘c2+ 13.♙e2 13.♙d1 ♘xa1 14.♖xe5+ ♖xe5 15.dxe5 is met by 15...♙f5 16.♙b2 0-0-0+ 17.♙c1 b5!

13...♖e1+ 14.♙f3 ♘xa1 15.♙b2 ♙e6 16.d5 0-0-0 17.dxe6 fxe6 18.♙g3

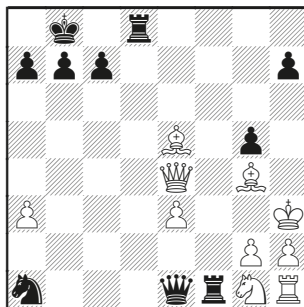


Alekhine's recommendation and the first new move of the game. M.Feigin - R.Fine Hastings 1936-37 continued 18.♙g4?? ♖xf2 19.♙xa1 h5+ 20.♙h3 g5 21.♙xe6+ ♙b8 22.♘f3 g4+ 23.♙xg4 hxg4+ 24.♙xg4 ♖xg2+ 25.♙f5 ♖h5+ 26.♙f6 ♖f8+ 0-1.

18...♖h8 19.♙xe6+ ♙b8 20.♙e5 ♖xf2 Winter refuted the alternative 20...♖xf2+ with 21.♙h3 ♖d1 22.♙g4 ♖xg1 23.♙g3 ♖f1 24.♙f3.

21.♙h3 Winter pointed out a trap that he avoided 21.♘h3?? allows 21...♖xg2+! 22.♙xg2 ♖d2+ 23.♙f3 ♖xh1+.

21...♖f1 22.♙g4 g5



Black had two alternatives 22...♖b1 23.♙xc7+!; Or, 22...♗xg1 23.♙f3, Winter stopped here. The refutation of 23...♙c8 is instructive 24.♖xb7+ ♘d7 25.♖xc7+ ♙e6 26.♙g4+ ♘d5 27.♖xd8+ ♙xe5 28.♖d4#.

23.♙f3 ♗xf3+ 24.♙xf3 24...g4+ 25.♙xg4 ♖xh1 26.♙f3 Winter.

1-0

Manchester Guardian, 20th January 1937

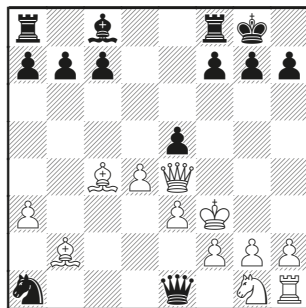
That is not the end of the story. Two years later the same line cropped up in the Varsity match, on board 1. Black sprung an improvement at move 15, but did no better than Reynolds.



Alfred William Bowen - J. Dean

Oxford University - Cambridge University, 1939

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♙b4 4.♖c2 d5 5.a3 ♙xc3+ 6.♖xc3 ♘e4 7.♖c2 ♘c6 8.e3 e5 9.cxd5 ♖xd5 10.♙c4 ♖a5+ 11.b4 ♘xb4 12.♖xe4 ♘c2+ 13.♙e2 ♖e1+ 14.♙f3 ♘xa1 15.♙b2 0-0



A new idea, but the black king is no safer on g8 than it was on c8.

16.h4! ♖d1+ 17.♙g3 ♘b3 18.♙f3 ♘d2+ If black grabs material with 18...♖xh1 then 19.♙xb3 is good for white, black's pieces do not coordinate.

19.♘xd2 ♖xd2 20.♙a1 ♙h8 21.h5 All white's pieces are aimed at a poorly defended black king.

21...exd4?? Black's only try was 21...f6 22.fxe5 f5 23.♖f4 b5.

22.♙d3 f5 23.♖xd4 23...♗f7 does not work 24.♖d8+ ♗f8 25.♙c4+ picks off the black queen.

1-0

Times, 21st March 1939

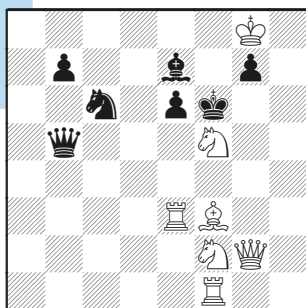
PROBLEM WORLD

by Christopher Jones

cjajones1@yahoo.co.uk

Grandmaster of Chess Composition

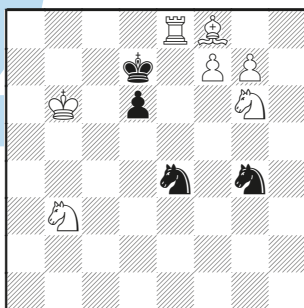
Solutions are given on page 766



Kabe Moen (USA)

Mate in 2

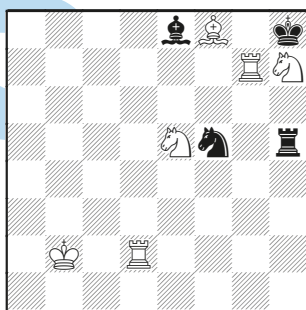
ORIGINAL



Michael McDowell (Westcliff on Sea)

Mate in 3

ORIGINAL

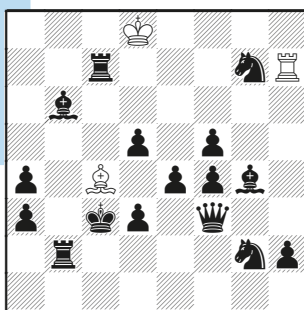


Paul Michelet (London)

Mate in 5

ORIGINAL

After Anderssen



Ljubomir Ugren (Slovenia)

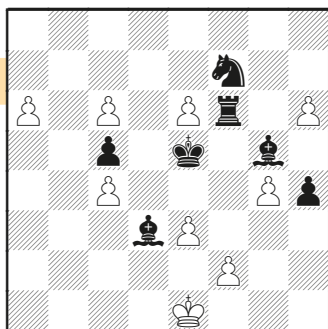
Helpmate in 3 5 solutions

ORIGINAL

Endgame Studies

by Ian Watson

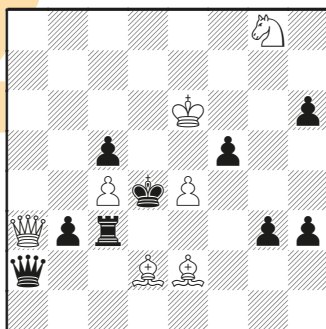
ian@irwatson.demon.co.uk



S Nielsen & M Minski

Perez de Arriaga JT 2017

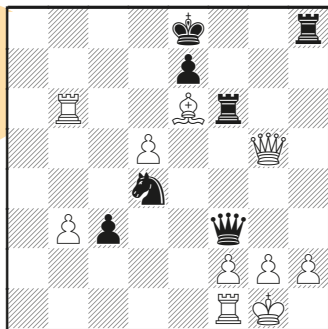
WIN



S Nielsen

UAPA 2017

WIN

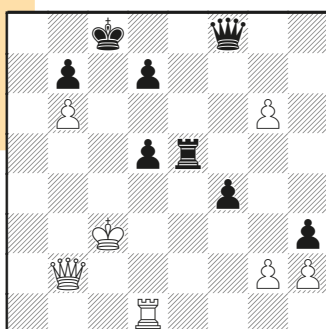


S Nielsen

Batumi Olympiad 2018

DRAW

Black to move first.



S Nielsen & M Minski

e4 e5 Cup 2018

WIN

A New STAR

Steffen Slumstrup Nielsen. A computer journalist from Denmark, he only began seriously composing studies around 2011. In the last four years, he has competed successfully in many composing tournaments, and he won the Bronze medal in the latest World Championship in Composing for Individuals, study section.

Here are four of his works; they aren't his most complex ones, and are solvable in a reasonable period of time, if you use a set. The first is a joint composition, by Nielsen and Martin Minski, who won the Silver medal in the World Championship - study composers often compete against each other, but often cooperate too. Minski is another of the newer generation of leading study composers.

Here's a massive hint for the second study: White makes *all* his moves with his knight. The solution is a full twenty-four moves long, but with that hint you might be able to solve it from the diagram, even without using your set. There is a difficulty, however; White can start with either 1.♖xh6 or 1.♖e7, and of course only one of those works, so you need to discover why it makes a difference if Black's h6 pawn remains on the board.

The third study is a homage to the famous "Shower of gold" game Levitsky - Marshall, played in 1912. So if you know your classic combinations you should immediately get the general idea, but White, unlike Levitsky, secures a draw. This position is, unusually for a study, Black to play first, but you know what he does.

Our final study is also homage to a famous game, this time Steinitz - von Bardeleben, from Hastings 1895. So, expect that crawling castle manoeuvre. Again it's a joint composition with Minski.

The solutions are on page 767.

SOLUTIONS TO PROBLEMS

The Barnes theme

Our 2-mover exemplifies a popular and attractive theme named after the eminent British problemist Barry Barnes. We have an apparently very strong try that threatens two mates, which however fails to one defensive move. So White instead considers two other possible key moves, each of which threatens just one of those mates, and one of these possible moves, it turns out, is indeed the key. In this case, the first possibility to be considered is 1.Rg1, which threatens both 2.♖g5 and 2.♖g6. Now if 1...♗xf5 we have 2.♗xg7. You will find that there are black moves that separate the threats (that is, fail only to 2.♖g5 or only to 2.♖g6); but the move that thwarts both threats is 1...♘xf5!. So let us look at 1.♘h3. This only threatens 2.♖g5. We do now have a mating continuation after 1...♘xf5 - 2.♙e2.. We still have 1...♗xf5 2.♖xg7; but because we no longer threaten 2.♖g6 we have no mate after 1...e5!. So finally we come to 1.♙h5!, threatening only 2.♖g6. This is indeed the key and against the responses 1...♘xf5 / g5 / ♘e5 / ♗xf5 we have 2.♘d3 / ♘g4 / ♘e4 / ♗xg7. The first three of these are new mates. The apparently far-from-the-action f1 rook plays a full part!

An (unexpected?) cyclic effect

Perhaps surprisingly, the key of our 3-mover does not threaten mate: 1.g8♘. This creates zugzwang. All three black defenders are now committed to defending two squares, so something must give. Look through the lines of play and you will see a very pleasing cyclic effect. If 1...d5 we have 2.♘f6+ and now 2...♘exf6 / ♘gxf6 3.♘c5 / ♘e5. If the g4 knight moves we have 2.♘c5+ and if 2...dxc5 / ♘xc5 then 3.♘e5 / ♘f6. And if the e4 knight moves we have 2.♘e5+ followed by 2...♘xe5 / dxe5 3.♘f6 / ♘c5. Each of the three

thematic white moves appears once as a sacrifice on move 2 and twice as a mating move: a perfect cycle. Michael tells me that there are other examples of this theme but I doubt whether they match the clarity and economy of this example.

A splendid prequel

After the first two moves of Paul's 5-mover aficionados will spot a classic 19th century 3-mover. But Paul's spectacular intro (enhanced by a highly plausible try) adds new lustre. Firstly, that try: it looks as though if we pile into the attack with 1.♙dg2 that must put paid to Black, but in fact 1...♙h6! then allows Black to survive beyond move 5. The reason for the efficacy of that defence is that it guards against 2.♘f6, which is - in both senses!- the key move. So 1.♘f6!. Now play continues 1...♘xg7 2.♙g2 ♙h7 and, à la Anderssen, we can now uncork the following sequence: 3.♘a2! (waiting; not 3.♘c2? ♙a4+!) ♙h5 4.♙g6! and the only move that prevents 5.♘f7, 4...♙xg6, allows 5.♘xg6. I do like it when it is possible to add a 'prequel' like this: it seems to make the original composer's intention not only more difficult to find but also when found all the more striking; and it also has the same sort of aesthetic appeal that one more often associates with endgame studies where all, or nearly all, the main players start from squares other than those from which the decisive action takes place.

Back (yet again) to the murky world of helpmates

Our Slovenian friend always gives value for money! In his helpmate there are no fewer than 5 collaborative BWBWBW move sequences ending up with Black checkmated. Even solving experts would

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take some time to unearth all 5 solutions, so if you have found some of them well done! In a helpmate with so many solutions one looks for pleasing diversity, but also some sense of 'belonging together', between solutions. You can assume that the white rook and white bishop are both involved in

all 5 solutions - for that not to be so would be a very serious defect. The solutions run as follows: 1.♖b1 ♜xh2 2.♜b2 ♜xg2+ 3.♜a1 ♜a2; 1.♜b4 ♜h6 2.♜a5 ♜xb6 3.♖b4 ♜a6; 1.♜d4 ♜xg7 2.♜e5 ♜g6 3.d4 ♜e6; 1.♜d2 ♜h3 2.♜e1 ♜xf3 3.d2 ♜f1; and 1.♜a2 ♜xd3 2.♜b3 ♜h6 3.♜c3+ ♜xb6.

SOLUTIONS TO ENDGAMES

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Nielsen & Minski – 2017

1.e7 ♜e6 2.c7 ♜d6 3.a7 ♜e4 4.h7 ♜f6 5.f4 mate. That's what problemists would call a 'model mate' with four 'self-blocks'.

1.a7? h3 2.a8♖ h2 3.c7 ♜e4 4.♖a1+ ♜d6 5.♖d1+ ♜xc7 draws. 1.c7? ♜d6 2.e7 ♜xf2 3.h7 draws (3.♜xf2 ♜xe7). In the main line, 3.h7? ♜xh7 is winning for Black.

Nielsen – UAPA

1.♜e7 ♖xa3 2.♜xf5+ ♜xe4 3.♜d6+ ♜d4 4.♜b5+ ♜e4 5.♜xc3+ ♜d4 6.♜b5+ ♜e4 7.♜d6+ ♜d4 8.♜f5+ ♜e4 9.♜xg3+ ♜d4 10.♜f5+ ♜e4 11.♜d6+ ♜d4 12.♜b5+ ♜e4 13.♜xa3 h2 14.♜b5 h1♖ 15.♜d6+ ♜d4 16.♜f5+ ♜e4 17.♜g3+ ♜d4 18.♜xh1 b2 19.♜g3 b1♖ 20.♜f5+ ♜e4 21.♜d6+ ♜d4 22.♜b5+ ♜e4 23.♜c3+ ♜d4 24.♜xb1 wins.

If the knight took the h-pawn on move one, the play would be the same up to 20.♜f5+, but then Black would reply with 20...♖xf5+ (21.♜xf5 stalemate).

Nielsen – Batumi Olympiad

1...♖g3 2.♖g6+ ♜d8 3.♖xg3 ♜e2+ 4.♜h1 ♜xg3+ 5.♜g1 ♜e2+ 6.♜h1 ♜xh2+ 7.♜xh2 ♜h6+ 8.♜h3 ♜xb6 9.♜a1 and White is drawing, as 9...c2 10.♜a8+ ♜c7 11.♜c8+ wins for White.

Not 2.♖xg3? ♜e2+ 3.♜h1 ♜xg3+ 4.♜g1 ♜e2+ 5.♜h1 ♜xh2+ 6.♜xh2 ♜h6+ 7.♜h3 ♜xb6 8.♜a1 c2 9.♜a8+ ♜f7 and Black wins because his king can play to f7.

Nielsen & Minski – 2018

1.♜d2 ♖f6 2.♜a1 ♜e2+ 3.♜d1 ♜d2+ 4.♜e1 ♜e2+ 5.♜f1 ♜f2+ 6.♜g1 ♜xg2+ 7.♜f1 ♜f2+ 8.♜e1 ♜e2+ 9.♜d1 ♜d2+ 10.♖xd2 ♖xa1+ 11.♖c1+ ♖xc1+ 12.♜xc1 ♜d8 13.g7 wins.

2...♜d8 3.♖b4 d6 4.g7 ♖xg7 5.♖xd6+ ♜e8 6.♖b8+ ♜f7 7.♖xb7+, or, in that line, 3...♜e2+ 4.♜xe2 ♖xa1 5.♖f8 mate. In the main line, 4.♖xd2 ♖xa1+ 5.♖c1+ ♖xc1+ 6.♜xc1 hxg2. Also in the main line, 7.♜h1? ♜xh2+ 8.♜g1 ♜g2+ 9.♜f1 ♜f2+ 10.♜e1 ♜e2+ 11.♜d1 ♜d2+ 12.♖xd2 ♖xa1+ 13.♖c1+ ♖xc1+ 14.♜xc1 h2.

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